DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 274 813 CE 045 183

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TITLE Performance of GED Holders Enrolled at the University of Wisconsin's Thirteen Campuses: 1979-1985.
INSTITUTION Wisconsin Univ., Milwaukee, Employment & Training Inst.
SPONS AGENCY Wisconsin State Dept. of Public Instruction, Madison.
PUB DATE Feb 86
NOTE 74p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; Educational Certificates; Educational Research; Higher Education; *High School Equivalency Programs; *School Holding Power; Student Attrition; *Student Certification
IDENTIFIERS *General Educational Development Tests; *University of Wisconsin

ABSTRACT

A study reviewed the performance of all 2,896 General Educational Development (GED) holders who entered the 13 campuses of the University of Wisconsin (UW) system from Fall 1979 through Fall 1984. Retention of GED holders was a serious problem at all schools. Of the 1,982 GED holders in the study who left college before graduation, 35 percent had earned no credits and 85 percent did not reach their sophomore year. At the UW-Milwaukee campus GED holders were compared to high school graduates enrolled at the school. GED holders performed worse than high school graduates from the lowest 20 percent of their class on measures of grades, credits earned, and semesters completed. The study also found a decline in reading scores of GED holders applying to UW-Milwaukee. Students earning GED certificates before 1978 scored at least at the ninth-grade level in reading. Students earning GED certificates after the test revisions in 1978 scored as low as fifth- and sixth-grade levels. GED scores and age were not helpful predictors of success in college. Nearly one-fourth of the GED holders were required to take remedial mathematics; one-fifth were required to take remedial English. (YLB)

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PERFORMANCE OF GED HOLDERS ENROLLED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN'S THIRTEEN CAMPUSES: 1979–1985

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CE045183

PERFORMANCE OF GED HOLDERS ENROLLED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN'S THIRTEEN CAMPUSES: 1979-1985

by Lois M. Quinn

Study Prepared by the

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February, 1986

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study reviewed the performance of all GED certificate holders who entered the thirteen universities of the University of Wisconsin from Fall, 1979-80 through Fall, 1984-85.

1. During the study period over 145,000 new freshmen enrolled in the thirteen baccalaureate-granting University of Wisconsin campuses. GED holders made up 2,896 of these students, or 2% of all students enrolled.

2. In all schools there were GED holders who performed well. Some students earned semester honors, forty-two students graduated, and many remained in good standing throughout their period of enrollment.

3. At Milwaukee GED holders were compared to high school graduates enrolled at the school. GED holders performed worse than high school graduates, even those accepted from the lowest 20% of their high school class. At the end of four semesters, only 31% of the GED holders were still enrolled in school, compared to 62% of high school graduates from the upper half of their class and 48% of graduates from the lower half of the class. High school graduates outperformed GED holders in grades, credits earned and semesters completed.

4. At Madison where GED holders had higher GED scores and 80% had completed high school algebra and geometry, their first semester grades were better than those of high school graduates from the lower half of their class.

5. Retention was a serious problem for GED holders at all University of Wisconsin schools. Only 4% of the 394 new freshmen enrolled in 1979-80 earned college degrees by Spring, 1985. Eleven percent were still enrolled in school, 1% had transferred to other UW schools, and 84% had left school without graduating.

6. Of the 1,982 GED holders in the study who left college before graduation, 35% had earned no credits and 85% did not reach their sophomore year (25 credits). Only 4% reached junior year status (54 credits).

7. UW-Milwaukee gives reading tests to GED holders applying to the school if they have GED scores below 265, have been out of school for several years or are considered for DEO programs. 56 GED holders tested at below a 9th grade level, as measured by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test. All of these students earned their GED certificates under the new GED test initiated in 1978. Twenty students (all earning GED certificates in 1978 or after) scored at the 6.0 grade level, the lowest possible score on the test.

8. Analysis of GED scores and Nelson-Denny Reading Test scores from Milwaukee suggests a significant drop in the reading skill levels needed to pass the 1978 version of the GED test. Students scoring in the 12th grade reading range on the Nelson-Denny Test had an average GED score of 239 if they were tested prior to 1978, compared to a 263 mean GED score if the GED was earned in 1978 or after.

9. At Milwaukee the Wisconsin English Placement Test (WEPT) is used to determine whether students can enroll in English 101. 92% of the GED holders with reading scores below the 10th grade level were placed in remedial English courses based on their WEPT scores. 87% of GED holders with reading levels below the 12th grade level were placed in remedial English.

10. A mean GED score of students enrolled in the 13 universities was 275. (A passing score of 225 is required in Wisconsin.) Scores varied by campus from a low of 263 at Superior to a mean high of 311 at Madison.

11. GED scores were not helpful predictors of success in college. Only 5% of a GED holder's first semester grades could be predicted from the student's GED score. (See pp. 33-36)

12. Likewise, age was not a significant factor in predicting success of GED holders in their first semester. Less than 2% of the first semester performance could be predicted from the GED holder's age. (See pp. 45-46)

13. Four universities had ACT scores available for 370 of the GED holders in the study. There was a relatively high correlation between GED scores and ACT test scores ($r = .7450$). The correlation between ACT scores and first semester grades was low ($r = .1738$).

14. Nearly 1/4 of the GED holders were required to take remedial math (full tuition, no college credits). Only half of these students passed their first remedial course. One-fifth of the GED holders were required to take remedial English courses, and 73% passed their first remedial course.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was made possible with a grant from the Bureau for Vocational Education of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction with Federal Vocational Education Act Funds. The project was supported from its inception by Dr. Herbert J. Grover, State Superintendent of Schools, Dr. John Benson, Assistant State Superintendent, and Richard Dignan, Director of the Bureau for Vocational Education.

The registrars and admission officers of all of the University of Wisconsin schools provided information on their admissions policies, as well as student records of all GED holders enrolled at their schools. Their efforts made this study possible--Ronald Dhuey (Green Bay), Robert LeRoy (LaCrosse), Herbert Evert (Madison), Cathy Schlemback (Platteville), Laura Patterson (Eau Claire), R. Thomas Snider (Oshkosh), Gladys Meier (UW Centers), Susan Johnson (Parkside), Mel Germanson (River Falls), Sharon Stewart (Stout), Lowell Banks (Superior), John Bodensteiner (Whitewater), David Echholm (Stevens Point), and Fred Sperry (Milwaukee).

We appreciate the work of Richard Norris (Milwaukee) and Keith White (Madison) in providing baseline data comparing the performance of GED holders to high school graduates at their institutions.

All of the University of Wisconsin schools indicated their commitment to the education of non-traditional students in our state. We hope that this study provides information which will further that goal.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 1984 the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction funded the Employment & Training Institute of the University of Wisconsin to conduct a series of studies evaluating the use of the General Educational Development (GED) certificate in determining access to and success in postsecondary institutions in the state. The studies were designed to assist the state Superintendent in evaluating what changes, if any, should be considered in the standards for granting high school equivalency certificates in Wisconsin.

In the six years covered by the GED study, two-thirds (38,500) of the 58,000 individuals in Wisconsin successfully completing their GED Tests indicated that their reason for taking the tests was for further education. One of the major institutions available for postsecondary education in the state is the University of Wisconsin.

The University of Wisconsin ranks as the fifth largest educational system in the nation in student enrollment. The University System provides postsecondary undergraduate, academic education for 140,000 students, by far the majority of all the state's undergraduate students. Baccalaureate programs are offered at thirteen campuses: Eau Claire, Green Bay, LaCrosse, Madison, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Parkside, Platteville, River Falls, Stout, Stevens Point, Superior, and Whitewater.

In addition, thirteen two-year campuses provide freshman and sophomore-level instruction designed primarily to facilitate transfer to degree-granting campuses. University of Wisconsin Centers are located in Baraboo, Fond du Lac, Menasha (Fox Valley), Janesville (Rock County), Manitowoc, Marinette, Marshfield (Wood County), Rice Lake (Barron County), Richland Center, Sheboygan, Waukesha, Wausau (Marathon County), and West Bend (Washington County).

This report examines the performance of GED holders at the four-year University of Wisconsin schools.

MAP A

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

Scale: 1 inch = approximately 60 miles.

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II. RESEARCH DESIGN

Because of the importance of the GED study, it was determined that the entire population of GED holders enrolled at University of Wisconsin schools would be studied. In the last decade most studies of GED holders have been limited to a sample of students (usually 50 or fewer) from a single campus. Such an approach would provide little insight into the experience of GED students in an educational system as diverse as the University of Wisconsin.

Consequently, in February, 1984, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction requested copies of student transcripts for all GED holders who first enrolled at University of Wisconsin schools from Fall, 1979-80 through Fall, 1984-85. All four-year schools and the two-year centers participated in the study.

In all, 5,479 GED holders were identified for the study period. Records were incomplete only for two schools:

--Platteville was able to identify only those GED holders who first enrolled from Summer, 1982 through Fall, 1984-85 (N=26). Possibly another twenty to thirty students may have first enrolled between Fall, 1979-80 and Spring, 1981-82.

--The records of a few GED holders enrolling at Whitewater in 1979 and not reenrolling in 1980 may have been archived and are not included. Whitewater also did not furnish transcripts of GED holders with out-of-state addresses.

Because of the large numbers of students involved, the UW Centers, Milwaukee and Parkside provided computer runs of data on each student. Fourteen hundred student transcripts from all other UW schools were reviewed, coded and computerized by Employment & Training Institute (ETI) staff.

Data was collected and computerized on each student's first and second semester experience (credits attempted, credits earned, GPA, academic status), remedial and first regular courses taken in English and math, transfer credits, semesters enrolled, last known academic status, and final grade point average.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction maintains records on all GED certificates issued in the state. Because these records are filed on cards by student name, it was necessary to look up GED scores for each student manually. ETI staff identified GED scores for 2,025 of the 2,895 students in the four-year school study (70.0% of the total). GED holders who earned their certificates out-of-state or who changed their names (i.e. women who married) were not located.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

UW CAMPUS	TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT 1979-80	TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT 1984-85	NEW FRESHMEN: FALL TERMS 1979 THRU 1984
FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITIES	(119,006)	(129,694)	(144,810)
MADISON	29,499	33,066	29,937
MILWAUKEE	20,610	21,989	16,881
EAU CLAIRE	10,111	10,260	15,197
GREEN BAY	3,541	4,426	4,354
LA CROSSE	8,313	8,566	12,297
OSHKOSH	8,295	9,788	11,099
PARKSIDE	4,977	5,203	6,010
PLATTEVILLE	4,521	5,089	7,140
RIVER FALLS	4,733	4,823	7,157
STEVENS POINT	8,378	8,454	11,190
STOUT	6,527	6,858	8,431
SUPERIOR	1,706	1,731	2,325
WHITEWATER	7,795	9,441	12,792
TWO-YEAR CENTERS	8,705	10,042	21,206
TOTAL	127,711	139,736	166,016

Source: The University of Wisconsin System Student Statistics, Term 1, 1984-85.

III. NUMBER OF GED HOLDERS ENROLLED

During the study period of Fall, 1979-80 through Fall, 1984-85, 145,000 new freshmen enrolled at University of Wisconsin four-year schools in the fall terms. GED holders for this period totaled 2,895, or 2% of this population. (During the same period GED certificates made up 13% of high school credential issued in the state.)

The highest number of GED holders were enrolled at campuses serving urbanized Southeastern Wisconsin--Milwaukee and Parkside. GED holders made up less than 1% of freshmen enrolling in the state's largest university at Madison.

Age of Enrollees

The GED holders varied in age at the time of their first admission to UW schools from 17 to 85 years. The median age of the GED holders was 22.4 years.

AGE OF GED HOLDERS AT TIME OF ENROLLMENT

Age	Number of Students	Percent of Total
16-19 years	686	24%
20-24 "	1,134	39
25-29 "	534	18
30-39 "	349	12
40-49 "	137	5
50 and above	54	2
TOTAL	2,894*	100%

*Age is missing for one student.

NUMBER OF GED HOLDERS ENROLLED IN UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS
FALL, 1979 - FALL, 1984

U.W. SCHOOL	Number of GED Holders Enrolled(1)	Percent of New Students Enrolled(2)
Milwaukee	952	6%
Parkside	544	9
Green Bay	309	7
Superior	200	9
Oshkosh	168	2
Whitewater (3)	118	1(3)
Eau Claire	149	1
Stevens Point	113	1
LaCrosse	113	0.9
Madison	93	0.3
Stout	91	1
Platteville (4)	26	0.7
River Falls	19	0.3
13 Four-Year Campuses	2,895	2%
UW CENTERS		
Regular Students	1,781	8%
Prisoners (5)	802	
TOTAL	2,583	12%
ALL U.W. SCHOOLS	5,478	3%

(1) Includes all GED holders who first enrolled at the University of Wisconsin from Fall, 1979-80 through Fall, 1984-85.

(2) Estimate is based on the number of new freshmen enrolling in the fall semesters.

(3) The records of a few GED holders enrolling in 1979 and not enrolled in 1980 may have been archived and are not included. Also, does not include GED holders with out-of-state addresses.

(4) Platteville only includes GED holders enrolled between Summer, 1982 and Fall, 1984-85.

(5) Includes students incarcerated at Taycheedah, Kettle Moraine and Oxford Correctional Institutions.

IV. PERFORMANCE OF GED HOLDERS COMPARED TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

The two largest schools in the University of Wisconsin (Milwaukee and Madison) agreed to provide data comparing the performance of GED holders with that of high school graduates enrolled at their schools.

UW-Milwaukee

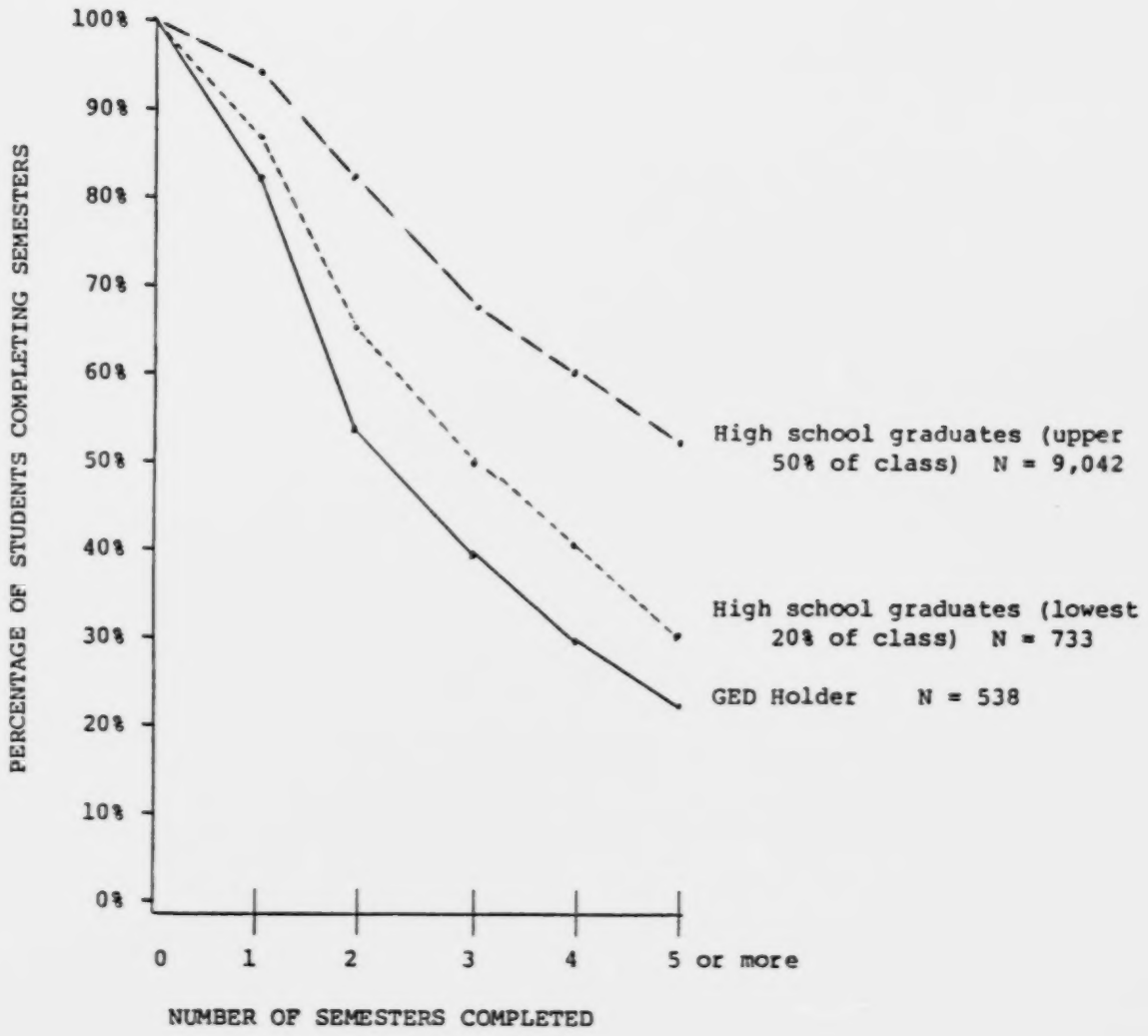
Milwaukee compared student records for both GED holders and high school graduates who first enrolled between Fall, 1978 through Fall, 1982. Experience was compared for each student's first four semesters.

In each measure of comparison (retention rates, mean grade point average, mean number of credits earned), GED holders as a group performed worse than high school graduates. High school graduates were also compared by rank in high school class: upper 50%, 40-49%, 30-39%, 20-29%, lowest 20%. The GED holders performed worse than high school graduates from every group including graduates from the lowest 20% of their high school class.

After four semesters, only 31% of the GED holders were still enrolled at UW-Milwaukee, compared to 62% of high school graduates from the upper half of their class, and 48% for graduates from the lower half of their class. The mean grade point average for GED holders was 1.98, compared to a 2.69 GPA for graduates in the upper half of their class and a 2.17 for graduates in the lower half of their class. The GED holders earned an average of 26 credits after 4 semesters. This compared to average credits of 49 earned by high school graduates in the upper half of their class, and average credits of 34 by graduates in the lower half of their class.

High school graduates who entered college immediately after leaving high school out-performed all other age groups of graduates enrolled at Milwaukee. This experience was not true for GED holders. For this population, 18 and 19-year olds earned fewer credits and had lower grades than any other age group of GED holders.

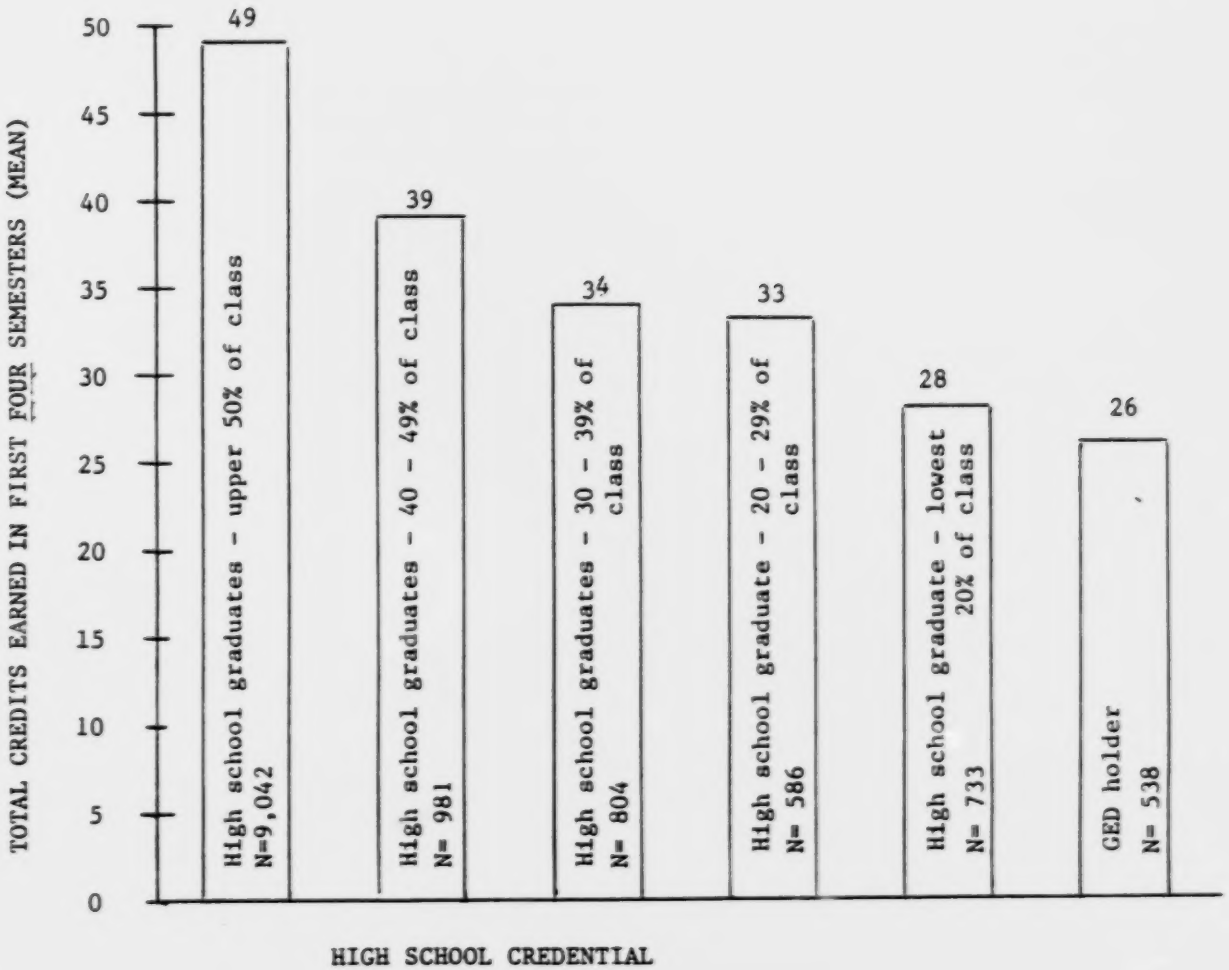
GED STUDENT RETENTION AT UW-MILWAUKEE



Includes GED holders and high school students who first enrolled at UWM from Fall, 1978 through Fall, 1982.

GED HOLDERS EARN FEWER CREDITS THAN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

AT U.W.-MILWAUKEE - 1st FOUR SEMESTERS



Includes high school graduates and GED holders who first enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee from Fall, 1978 through Fall, 1982.

COMPARISON OF GED HOLDERS AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

ENROLLED AT U.W. - MILWAUKEE: 1978- 1982

	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE		
	Upper 50% of Class	Lower 50% of Class	GED HOLDERS
Number of Students Enrolled	9,042	3,104	538
% of Students Completing First Four Semesters	62%	48%	31%
Cummulative GPA at End of 4th Semester (or at time of leaving)	2.69	2.17	1.98
Mean Number of Credits Earned by End of 4th Semester	49	34	26
Mean Number of Semesters Completed (out of 4)	4	3	2

UW-Madison

Unlike Milwaukee where a large number of GED holders are accepted, Madison GED holders represented a far more select group of students. Their GED total scores averaged 311 and 80% of the students had completed high school algebra and geometry.

Madison staff compared the performance of GED holders and high school graduates entering the school in the fall semesters from 1979 through 1983. The first semester grades of GED holders were below the average for high school graduates. However, GED holders out-performed those high school graduates accepted from the lower half of their high school class.

GED HOLDERS PERFORM WELL AT U.W.-MADISON

High School Credential	Number of Students(1)	Mean GPA(2)	Percent of Students by Range of GPAs 0.0-0.9	1.0-1.9	2.0-2.9	3.0-4.0
GED Holders	51	2.35	14%	16%	35%	35%
High School Graduates by rank in class:						
1 - 49%ile	550	2.25	7%	24%	57%	12%
50 - 74%ile	7,048	2.42	4%	19%	56%	20%
75 - 99%ile	15,057	2.94	1%	7%	42%	50%
ALL UW FRESHMEN(3)	24,016	2.77	2%	11%	47%	39%

(1) Includes freshmen entering UW-Madison in Fall of 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, and 1983.
(2) Grade point average for first semester enrolled.
(3) Includes 1,310 other students accepted with neither a high school diploma or a GED.

V. RETENTION RATES A SERIOUS PROBLEM

Since the average student at the University of Wisconsin takes from nine to ten and a half semesters to graduate, only GED holders who first enrolled in the 1979-80 school year were expected to graduate by the study's conclusion in February, 1985. However, only 4% of the 394 new freshmen from 1979-80 had earned college degrees. Forty-two students (11% of the total) were still enrolled in school, four students (1%) had transferred to other UW schools, and 84% had left school. (It was not possible to identify students who transferred to private schools or colleges in other states.)

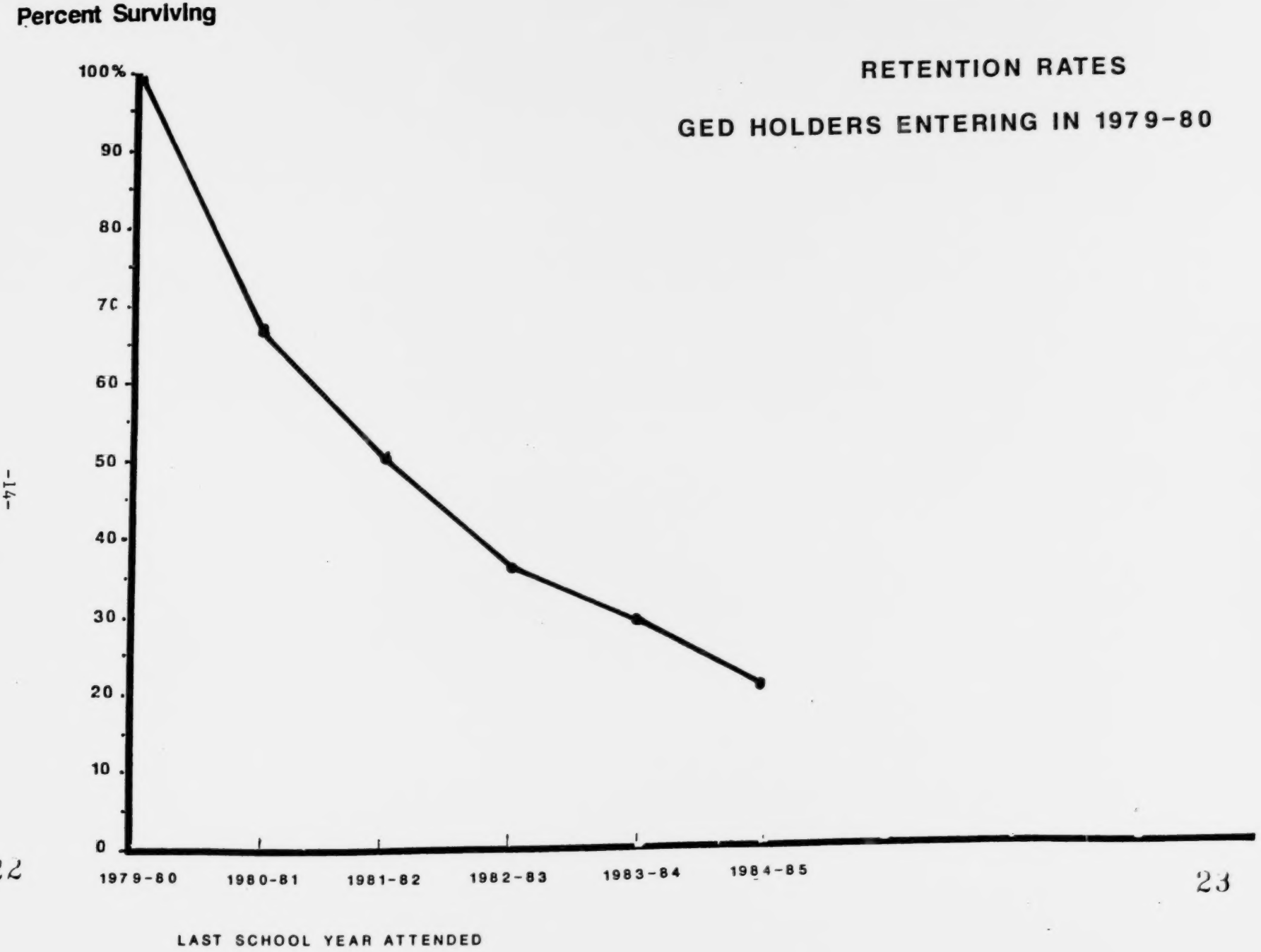
Retention rates have been steadily declining since 1979. The new freshmen of 1983-84 had a dropout rate of about 60% within one year of beginning school. **Last known retention rates for all 13 schools are shown on p. 19.**

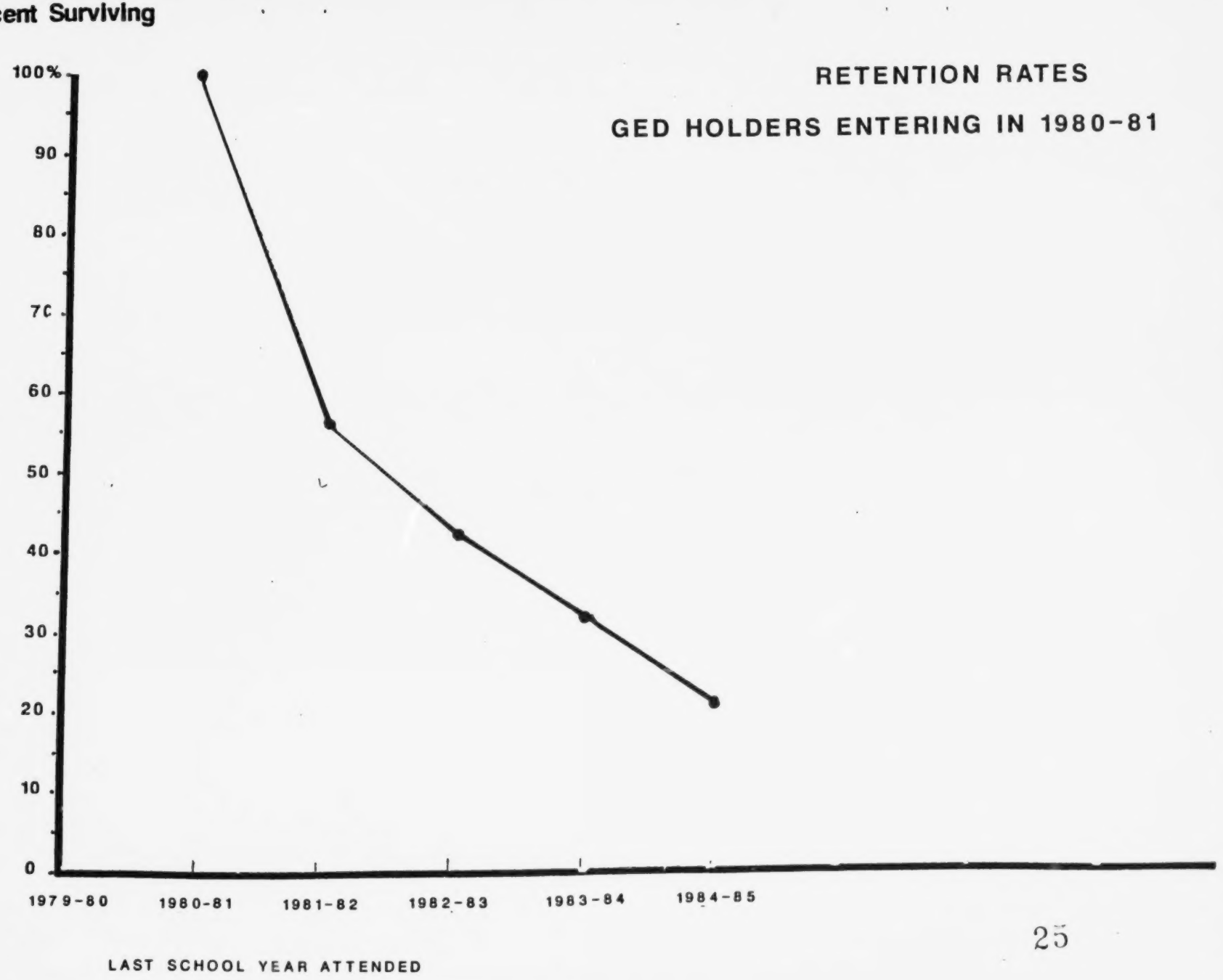
RETENTION RATES FOR GED HOLDERS

11 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS*

	PERCENT OF STUDENTS STILL ENROLLED					
YEAR ENTERED	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	Fall 1984-85
1979-80	100%	66%	50%	36%	29%	21%
1980-81		100%	56%	42%	32%	21%
1981-82			100%	54%	36%	21%
1982-83				100%	58%	31%
1983-84					100%	41%

Percent retained is calculated as the ratio of students still enrolled (plus students who have graduated) compared to the intial freshman cohort.
*Does not include Milwaukee or Parkside.


Percent Surviving
RETENTION RATES
GED HOLDERS ENTERING IN 1979-80
100%
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1979-80
1980-81
1981-82
1982-83
1983-84
1984-85
LAST SCHOOL YEAR ATTENDED


Percent Surviving
RETENTION RATES
GED HOLDERS ENTERING IN 1980-81
100%
90
80
70
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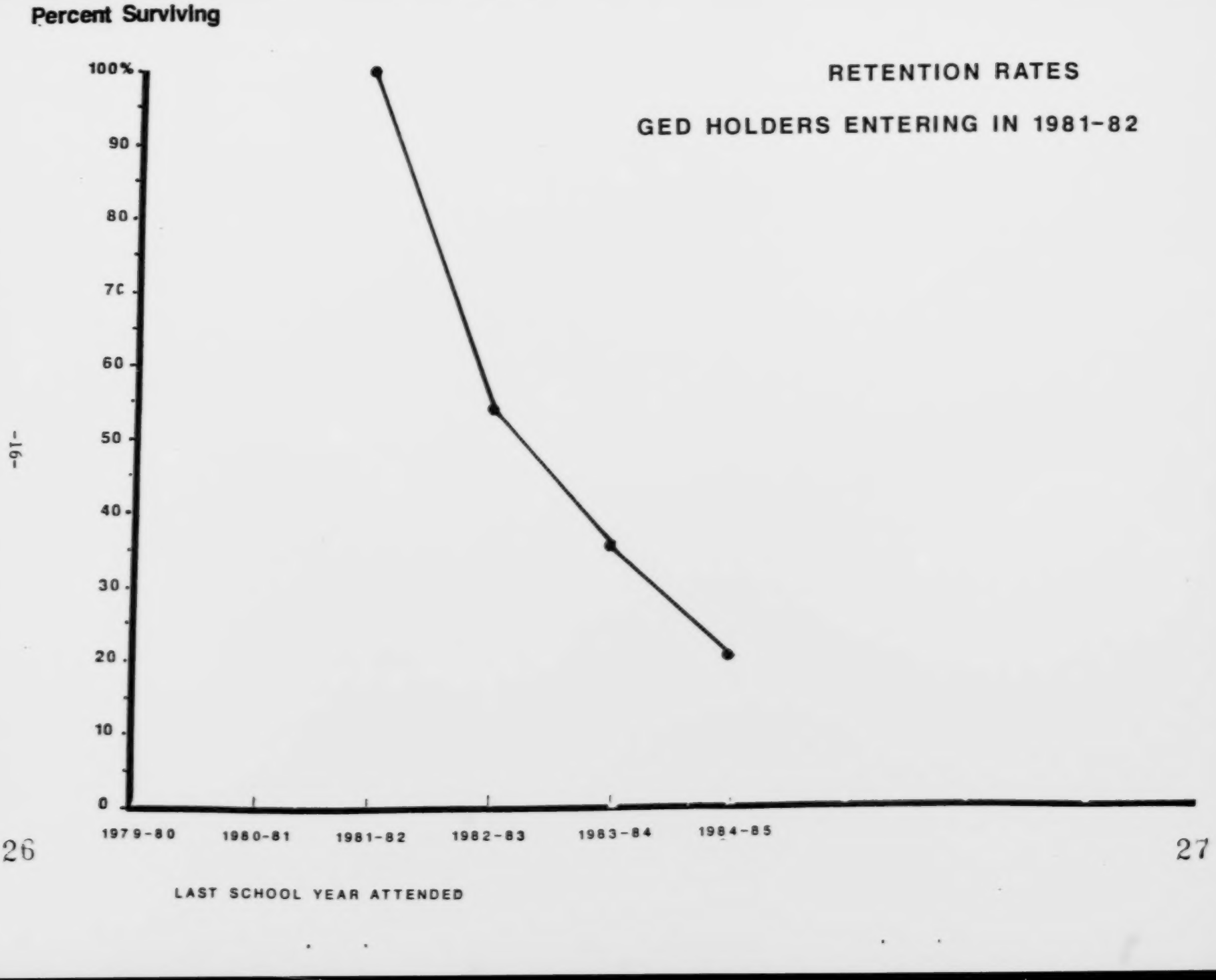
1979-80
1980-81
1981-82
1982-83
1983-84
1984-85
LAST SCHOOL YEAR ATTENDED


Percent Surviving
RETENTION RATES
GED HOLDERS ENTERING IN 1981-82
100%
90
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1979-80
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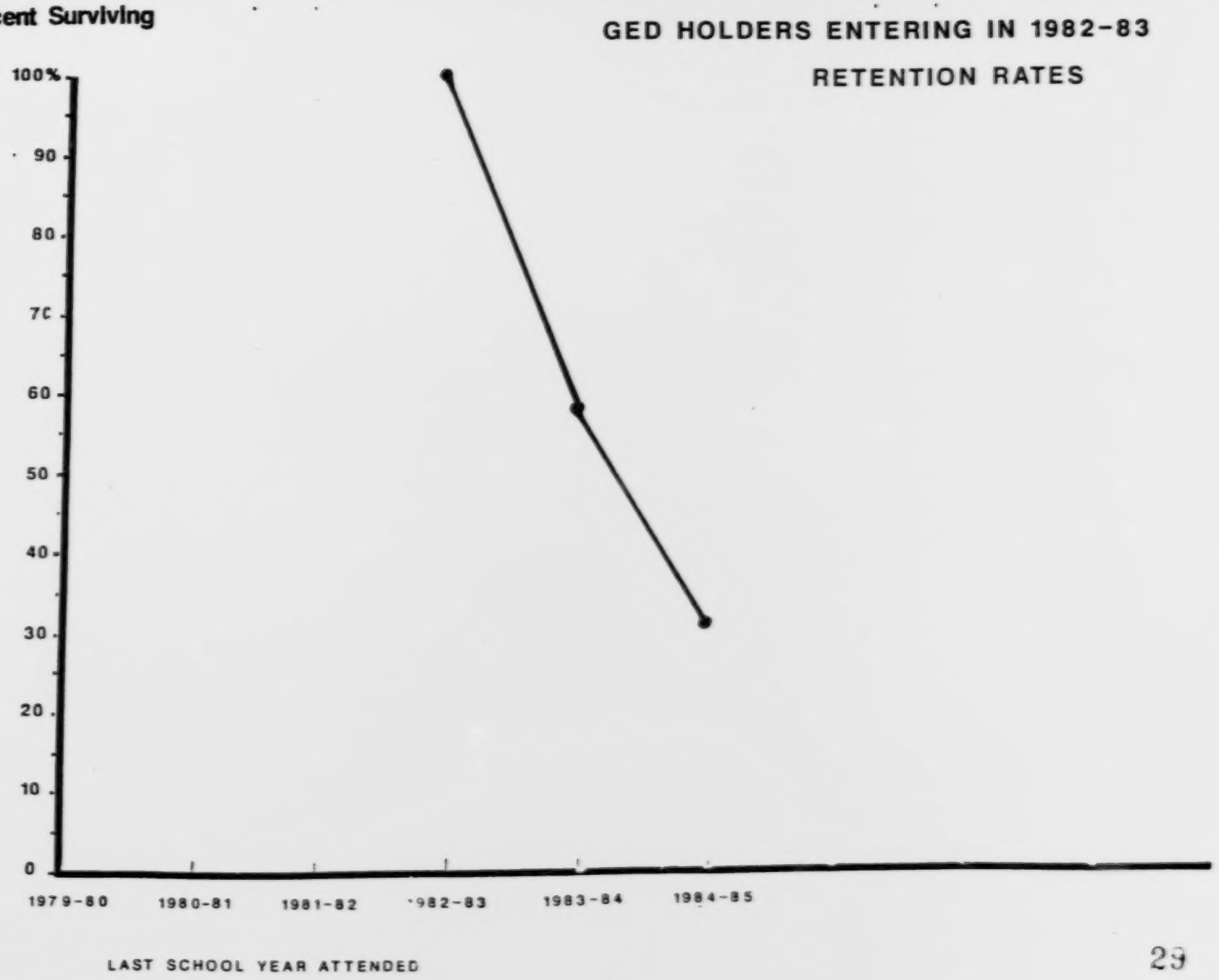
1981-82
1982-83
1983-84
1984-85
LAST SCHOOL YEAR ATTENDED


Percent Surviving
GED HOLDERS ENTERING IN 1982-83
RETENTION RATES
100%
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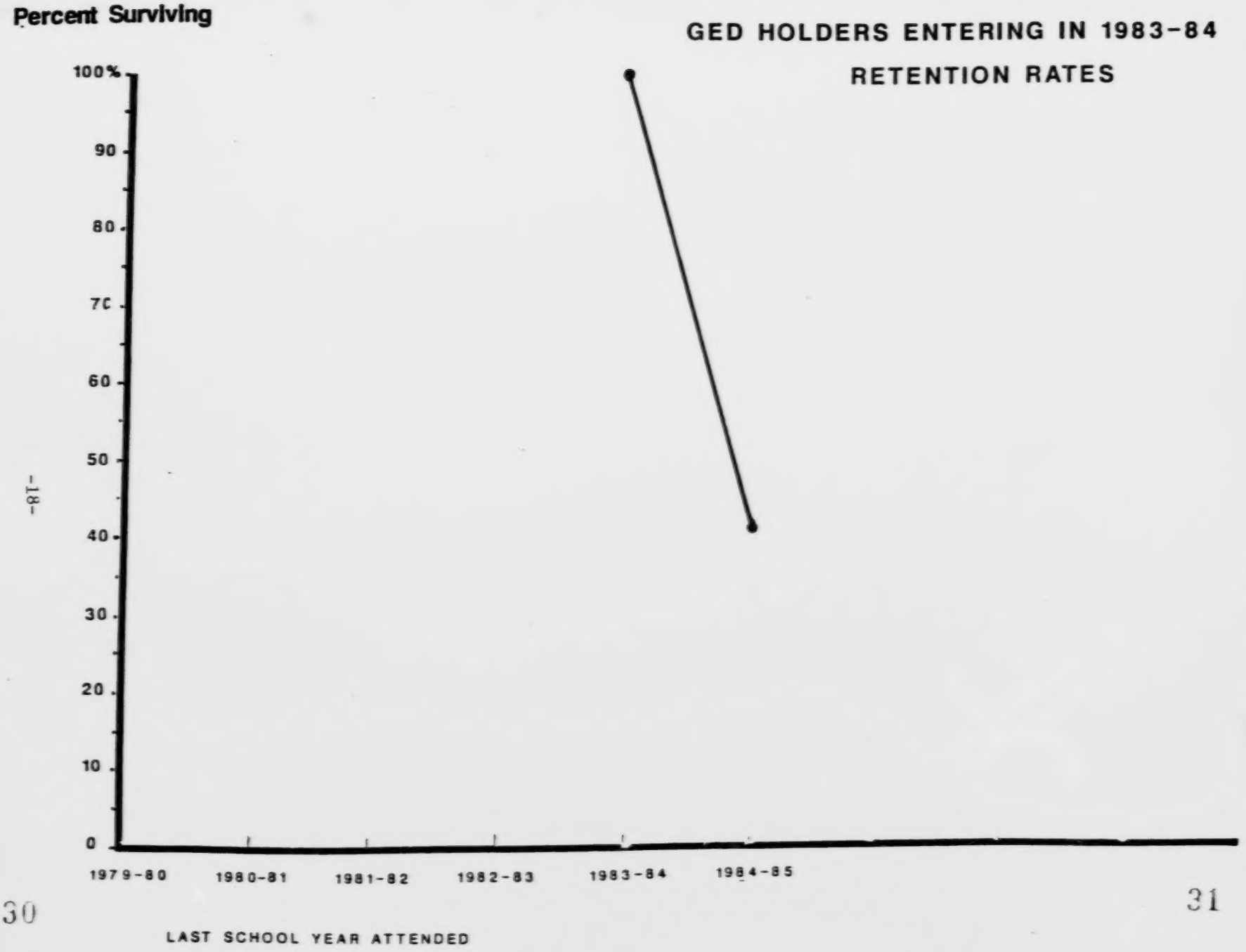
1979-80
1980-81
1981-82
1982-83
1983-84
1984-85
LAST SCHOOL YEAR ATTENDED


Percent Surviving
GED HOLDERS ENTERING IN 1983-84
RETENTION RATES
100%
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1979-80
1980-81
1981-82
1982-83
1983-84
1984-85
LAST SCHOOL YEAR ATTENDED

RETENTION RATES OF GED HOLDERS ENROLLED AT UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS

STATUS AS OF FEBRUARY, 1985

Year First Enrolled	Number of Students	Percent Still Enrolled	Percent Graduated	Percent Transfered to Other UW Schools	Percent Left Before Graduation	TOTAL
1979-80 school year	394	10.6%	4.1%	1.0%	84.3%	100.0%
1980-81 school year	532	17.5	2.6	0.9	79.0	100.0%
1981-82 school year	491	19.0	0.8	0.4	79.8	100.0%
1982-83 school year	580	27.7	1.2	0.9	70.2	100.0%
1983-84 school year	597	38.7	0.2	0.3	60.8	100.0%

Graduates

Forty-two GED holders in the study had graduated by the end of the study period (February, 1985). At the time they started college these students ranged in age from 18 to 53 years. The median age was 23. GED scores were available for 22 of the graduates and ranged from 239 to 326. The median GED score was 265. (The median GED score for persons tested prior to 1978 was 259. For graduates who had earned their GED in 1978 and after, the median GED score was 289.)

Students Still Enrolled

Most of the GED holders still enrolled in school had grades of 2.00 or better. 78% were in good academic standing.

Credits Earned by Year Enrolled

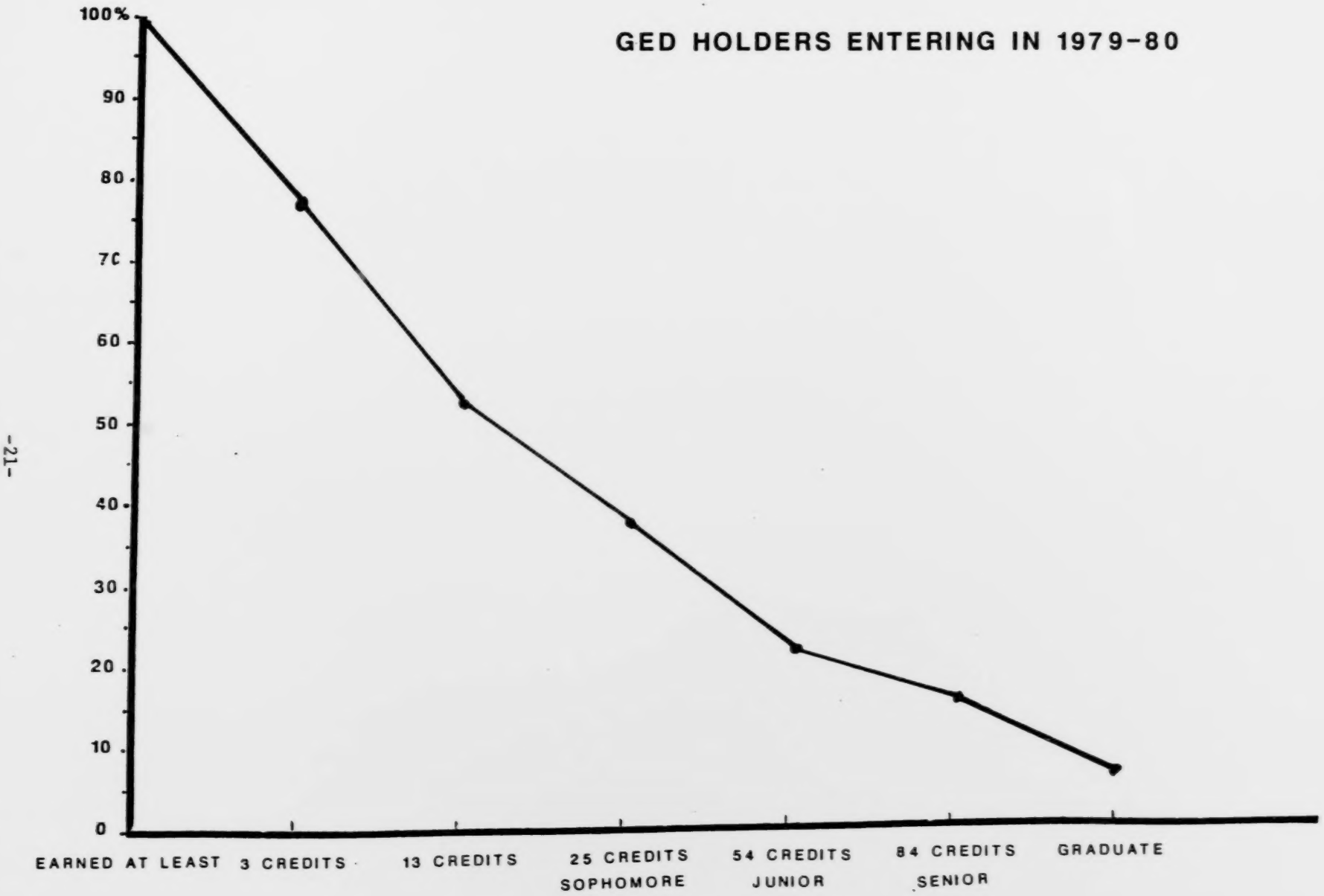
Most GED holders in the study did not reach sophomore year standing in credits. About half of the students earned at least 13 credits.

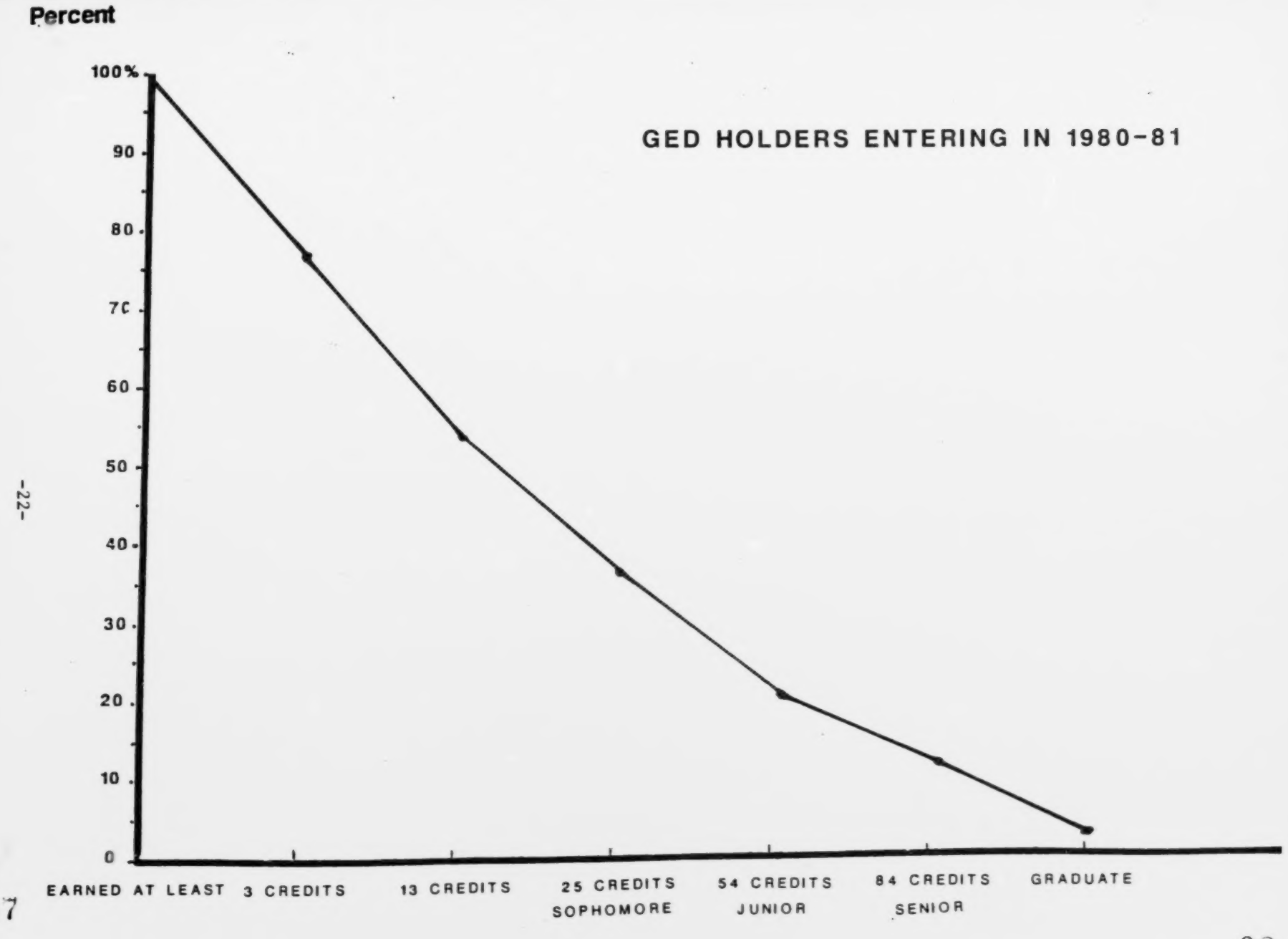
CREDITS EARNED AS OF FEBRUARY, 1985

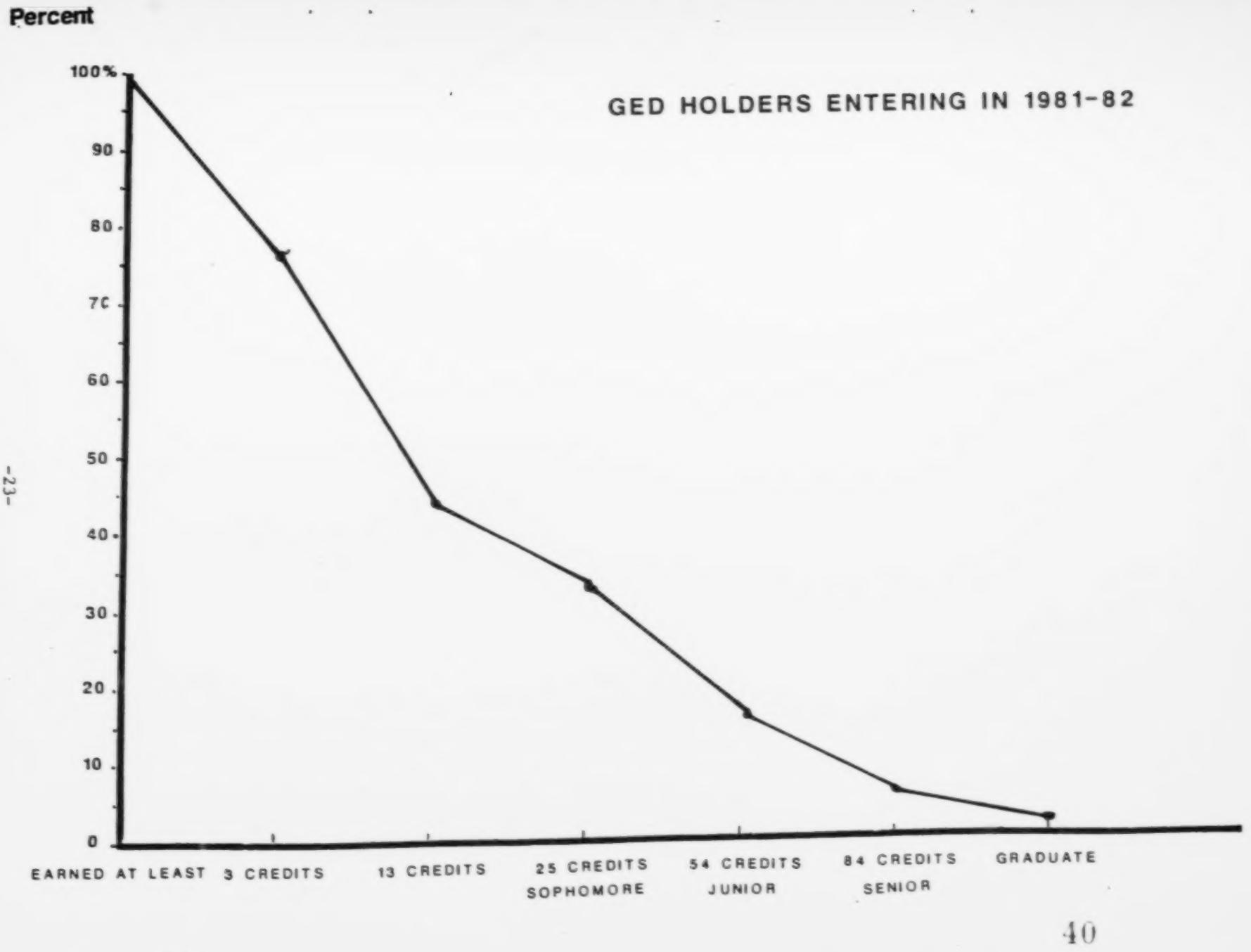
13 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS

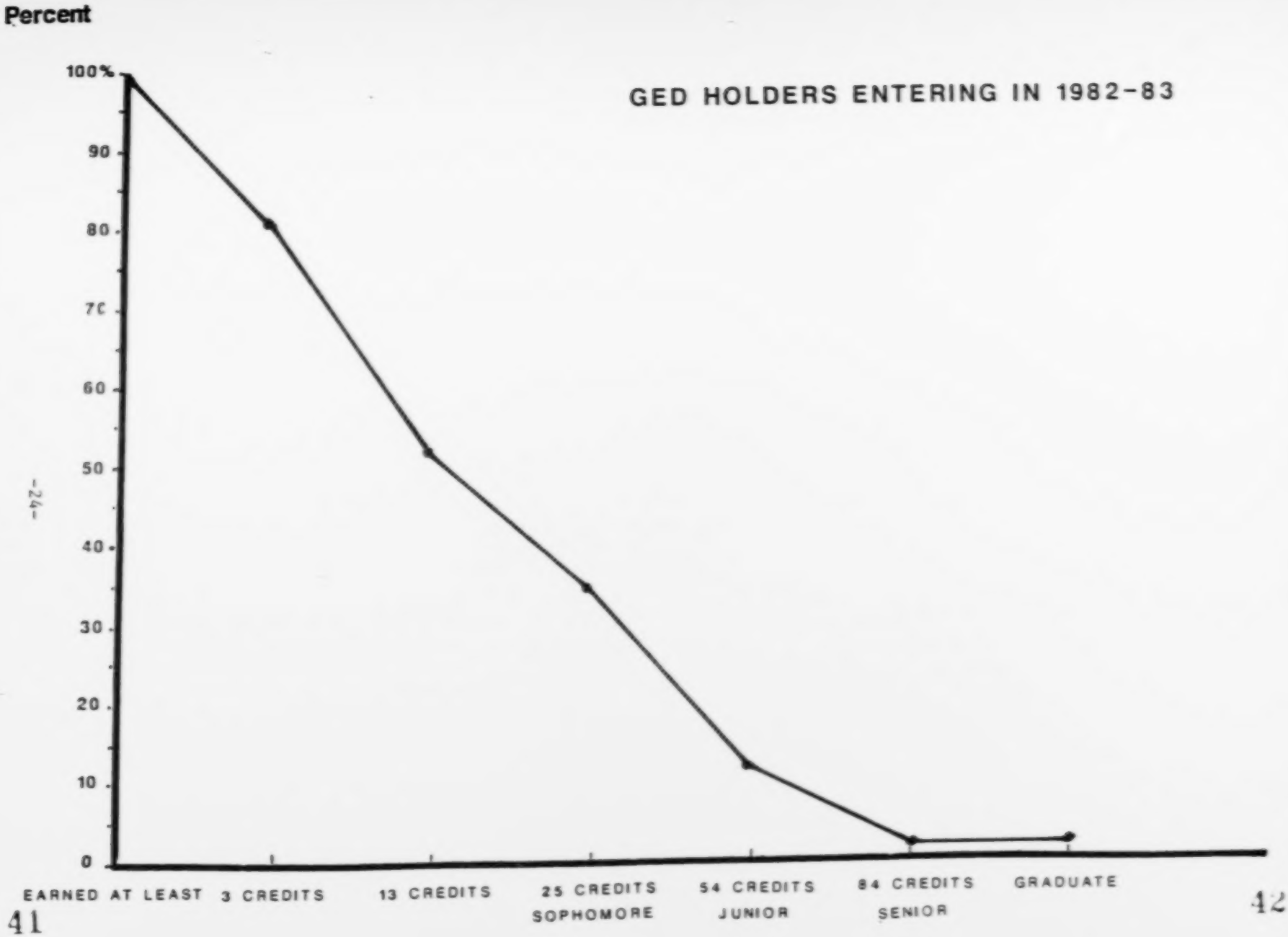
	YEAR STUDENTS ENROLLED					
	1979-1980	1980-1981	1981-1982	1982-1983	1983-1984	1984-1985
Percent of students earning:						
At least 3 credits	77%	77%	77%	80%	77%	70%
At least 13 credits	52	53	44	51	45	18
At least 25 credits (sophomore standing)	37	36	33	34	22	--
At least 54 credits (junior standing)	22	20	16	11	1	--
At least 84 credits (senior standing)	15	12	6	1	--	--
Graduate	6	2	1	1	--	--

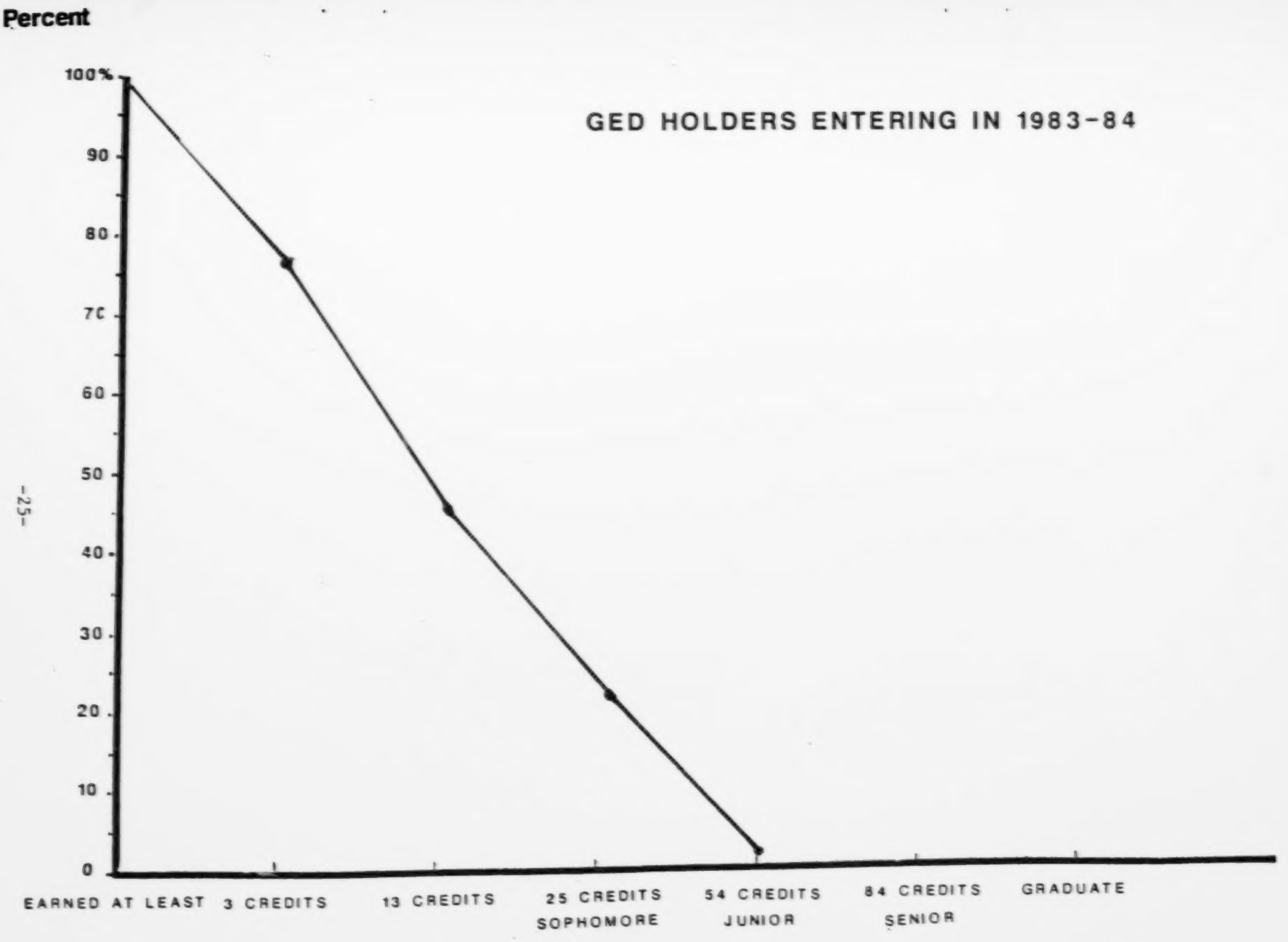
Includes credits earned only at the University of Wisconsin school (except for graduates, who may have brought transfer credits from other institutions, the military of CLEP tests). Quarter credits earned at River Falls and Superior were converted to the equivalent credits used by the other UW campuses.


Percent Surviving
GED HOLDERS ENTERING IN 1979-80
100%
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
EARNED AT LEAST 3 CREDITS
13 CREDITS
25 CREDITS
SOPHOMORE
54 CREDITS
JUNIOR
84 CREDITS
SENIOR
GRADUATE


Percent
100%
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
GED HOLDERS ENTERING IN 1980-81
EARNED AT LEAST 3 CREDITS
13 CREDITS
25 CREDITS
SOPHOMORE
54 CREDITS
JUNIOR
84 CREDITS
SENIOR
GRADUATE


Percent
GED HOLDERS ENTERING IN 1981-82
100%
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
EARNED AT LEAST 3 CREDITS
13 CREDITS
25 CREDITS
SOPHOMORE
54 CREDITS
JUNIOR
84 CREDITS
SENIOR
GRADUATE


Percent
GED HOLDERS ENTERING IN 1982-83
100%
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
EARNED AT LEAST 3 CREDITS
13 CREDITS
25 CREDITS SOPHOMORE
54 CREDITS JUNIOR
84 CREDITS SENIOR
GRADUATE


Percent
GED HOLDERS ENTERING IN 1983-84
100%
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
EARNED AT LEAST 3 CREDITS
13 CREDITS
25 CREDITS
SOPHOMORE
54 CREDITS
JUNIOR
84 CREDITS
SENIOR
GRADUATE

VI. READINESS OF GED HOLDERS FOR COLLEGE

Success in college requires academic ability as well as motivation, perseverance and, usually, hard work. Since many students with college-level academic skills may fail for reasons other than ability and readiness, one portion of the GED study focused on measurements of GED holders' ability to do college-level work.

One school, UW-Milwaukee, made available a file of applicants (including GED holders) who were required to take a Nelson-Denny Reading Test prior to their admission or as a condition for acceptance in the Department of Educational Opportunity. GED holders were tested if they had GED scores below 265 or had been out of school for several years. High school graduates were tested if they had been out of school two or more years or were in the bottom half of their high school class. The records were for the time period from 1979 through December, 1984. All records were coded and computerized by ETI staff, including records for 301 GED holders.

Skill levels for this special population of GED holders, as measured by the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, ranged from below a 6th grade level (the lowest possible score) to reading levels of 15.0 (the highest possible score). The test file revealed a marked change in reading scores for students who earned their GED certificates before and after January, 1978--the date of the GED test revision.

All GED holders earning their certificates prior to 1978 posted Nelson-Denny scores of 9th grade (9.3) or better. GED holders who earned their certificates under the new form of the GED test initiated in 1978 included persons who tested at a 6th grade reading level or below. In fact, 23% of the students tested had below a 9th grade reading level, as measured by the Nelson-Denny Test.

Analysis of average GED scores by range of Nelson-Denny Reading Test scores suggests a significant drop in the reading skill levels necessary to pass the 1978 version of the GED test. Students scoring in the 12th grade reading range on the Nelson-Denny had a average GED score of 239 if they were tested prior to 1978, compared to a 263 score for students tested in 1978 and after. Liekwise, the students reading at a 14th grade level had an average GED score of 246 if tested before 1978 and a 275 average if tested in 1978 or after.

NELSON-DENNY READING TEST SCORES FOR GED HOLDERS

TESTED PRIOR TO ADMISSION TO UW-MILWAUKEE

GED HOLDERS EARNING CERTIFICATES BEFORE 1978

Grade Level Equivalents on Nelson-Denny Reading Test	Students Earning GED Before 1978		
	Number of Students	Percent of Total	Cumulative Percent
6th grade or below	--	--	--
7.0 - 7.9	--	--	--
8.0 - 8.9	--	--	--
9.0 - 9.9	7	11.1%	11.1%
10.0 - 10.9	5	7.9	19.0
11.0 - 11.9	7	11.1	30.1
12.0 - 12.9	11	17.5	47.6
13.0 - 13.9	16	25.4	73.0
14.0 - 14.9	9	14.3	87.3
15.0 and above	8	12.7	100.0%
TOTAL TESTED	63	100.0%	

GED HOLDERS EARNING CERTIFICATES IN 1978 AND AFTER

Grade Level Equivalents on Nelson-Denny Reading Test	Students Earning GED After Jan. 1, 1978		
	Number of Students	Percent of Total	Cumulative Percent
6th grade or below	20	8.4%	8.4%
7.0 - 7.9	10	4.2	12.6
8.0 - 8.9	26	10.9	23.5
9.0 - 9.9	31	13.0	36.5
10.0 - 10.9	21	8.8	45.3
11.0 - 11.9	26	10.9	56.2
13.0 - 13.9	34	14.3	83.1
14.0 - 14.9	22	9.3	92.4
15.0 and above	18	7.6	100.0%
TOTAL TESTED	238	100.0%	

GED students were required to take the Nelson-Denny Reading Test if their total GED score was below 265, they had been out of school for several years, or as a condition for acceptance in the Department of Educational Opportunity. These records are for the time period from 1979 through December, 1984.

Reading Scores for High School Graduates

Reading tests given to high school graduates seeking admission to Milwaukee indicate serious reading problems among persons receiving high school diplomas. This high risk group, while hardly a benchmark preferred for high school graduates, outperformed GED holders who earned their certificates in 1978 and after. GED holders earning their certificates under the old test used prior to 1978 performed better than the low-achieving high school group.

READING LEVELS OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES TESTED PRIOR TO ADMISSION TO U.W.-MILWAUKEE (1979-1984)

Grade Level Equivalents on Nelson-Denny Reading Test	Number of Students Tested	Percent of Total	Cummulative Percent
6th grade or below	476	6.7%	6.7%
7.0 - 7.9	325	4.6	11.3
8.0 - 8.9	520	7.4	18.7
9.0 - 9.9	566	8.0	26.7
10.0 -10.9	727	10.3	37.0
11.0 -11.9	588	8.4	45.4
12.0 -12.9	964	13.7	59.1
13.0 -13.9	1,397	19.8	78.9
14.0 -14.9	797	11.3	90.2
15.0 and above	689	9.8	100.0%
TOTAL TESTED	7,049	100.0%	

High school graduates are required to take the Nelson-Denny Test if they are in the lower half of their high school class and have been out of school for two or more years.

VII. NEED FOR REMEDIATION

Data was available on remedial courses taken in English and math by GED holders at all schools except Parkside. Nearly 1/4 of the GED holders were required to take remedial math courses before enrolling in freshman-level courses. Only half of these students successfully completed their first course. 32% failed with a U.

Twenty percent of the GED holders were required to take remedial English courses before enrolling in for-credit college level courses. Three-fourths of these students passed the remedial course.

GRADES FOR GED HOLDERS TAKING REMEDIAL MATH OR ENGLISH COURSES AT 12 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS*

	REMEDIAL MATH		REMEDIAL ENGLISH	
Course Grade	Number of Students	Percent Total	Number of Students	Percent Total
A	52	10%	24	5%
B	65	12	97	21
C	78	14	103	22
Passing	93	17	118	25
(Sub-Total)	(288)	(53%)	(342)	(73%)
D	45	8	17	4
U	177	32	100	22
Incomplete	3	1	--	--
Withdrew	30	6	4	1
(Sub-Total)	(255)	(47%)	(121)	(27%)
Percent of all GED holders enrolled	23%		20%	

*Does not include Parkside

At UW-Milwaukee the Wisconsin English Placement Test (WEPT) is used to determine whether students can enroll in English 101. 92% of GED holders with reading scores below the 10th grade level were required to take remedial English. 87% of GED holders with reading levels below the 12th grade level were placed in remedial English.

PERFORMANCE OF 721 GED HOLDERS
GIVEN THE WISCONSIN ENGLISH PLACEMENT TEST

STUDENT PERFORMANCES ON W.E.P.T.	GED HOLDERS BY GED TOTAL SCORE					TOTAL
	225-249	250-274	275-299	300-349	350-400	
Number of students tested	140	201	211	162	7	721
Percent of students						
1. Must take remedial English courses	86%	73%	47%	26%	29%	57%
2. May take Eng. 101	13	24	38	35	-	28
3. May take Eng. 201	1	3	15	39	71	15
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Wisconsin English Placement Test scores for GED holders tested from Fall, 1979 through Fall, 1984.

VIII. FAILURE OF GED SCORES TO PREDICT SUCCESS IN COLLEGE

The GED test battery contains five tests (writing skills, social studies, science, reading skills, and mathematics). Results for each test are expressed on a standard score scale ranging from 20 to 80. The standard scores are normalized, based on a national sample of high school seniors, with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10. To pass the GED tests in Wisconsin, it is currently necessary to score a minimum of 35 on each of the five subtests and to earn a total score of at least 225. The GED Testing Service equates a 225 score as one that 71% of its high school senior sample group could meet. A GED total score of 250 is one that 50% of the sample group could meet and a score of 300 is one that 14% of the sample could meet.

Students tested from 1968 to 1977 took GED tests normed in 1967. Substantial changes were made in the 1978 version of the GED test, which was normed in Spring of 1977. Standard scores for this version were adjusted again in 1982 based on a Spring of 1980 sampling group.

Correlations Between Grades and GED Scores

GED scores were not helpful predictors of success in college. The correlations between GED test scores and student performance, while statistically significant, were very small. Only 5% of a GED holder's first semester grades could be predicted from the student's GED score. ($r = .2300$, $r^2 = .0529$) Only 6% of the student's cummulative GPA overlapped with the GED scores. ($r = .2548$, $r^2 = .0649$)

The tables below show the correlations among GED scores, subtest scores and student performance. Because the analyses of GED holders tested in reading at both UW-Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Area Technical College suggested different standards for GED certificates issued prior to 1978, from 1978 to 1981, and after 1981, correlations are shown for each time period as well.

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN FIRST SEMESTER GRADES

AND GED SCORES - BY YEAR GED CERTIFICATE WAS EARNED

12 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS #

GED SCORES	TESTED BEFORE 1978	TESTED 1978-1981	TESTED 1982-1985	ALL STUDENTS
GED Total	.2708	.2163	.2945	.2300
Sub-Test Scores:				
Math	.2313	.1553	.2443	.1710
Reading	.2780	.1958	.2518	.2103
Science	.2180	.1639	.2007	.1762
Social Studies	.2489	.2103	.2663	.2243
Writing	.2798	.1994	.2282	.2022
N =	290	905	464	1,661

Does not include UW-Parkside.

All correlations are significant at the .01 level.

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN LAST GRADE POINT AVERAGE AND

GED SCORES - BY YEAR GED CERTIFICATE WAS EARNED

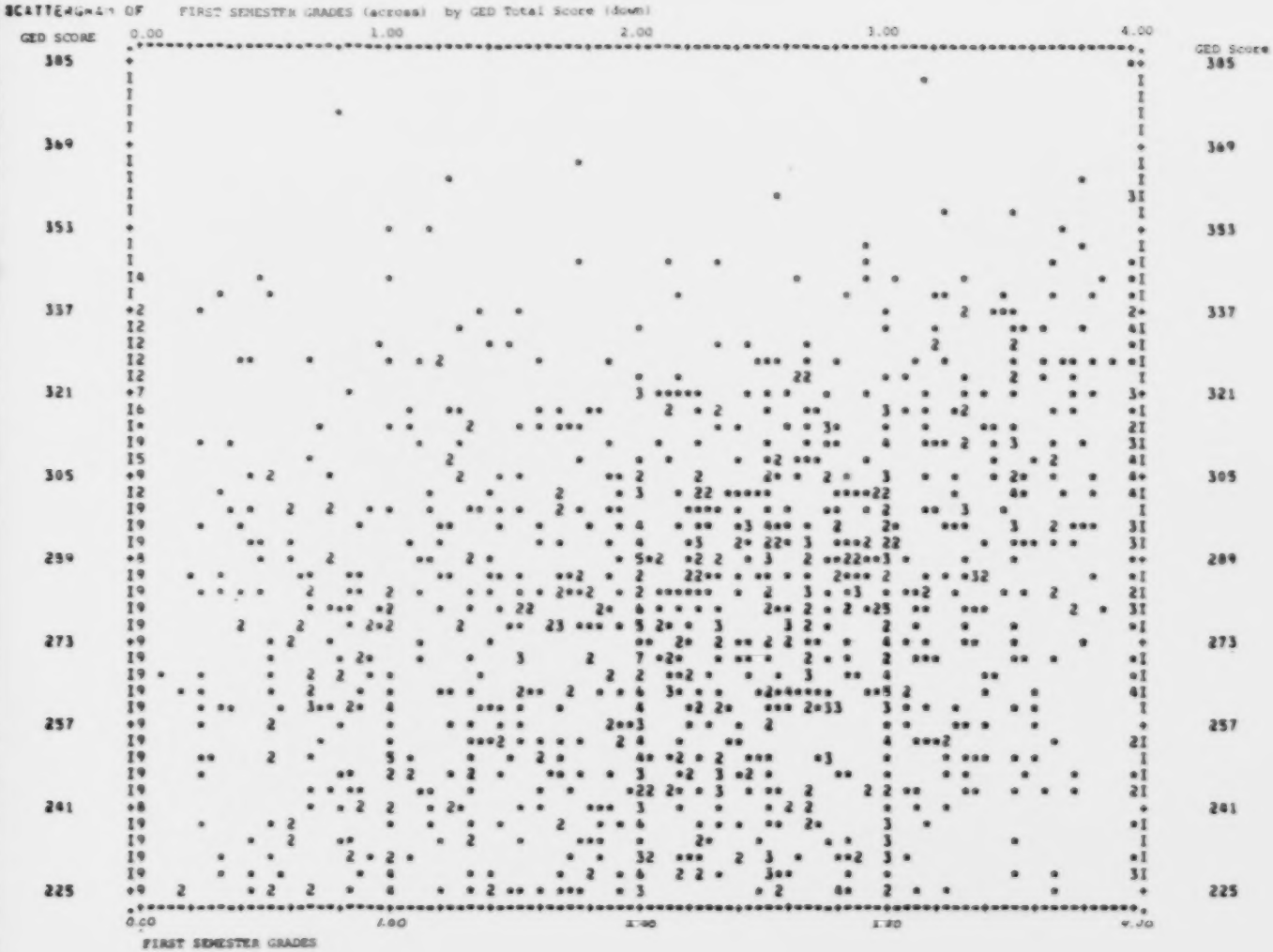
12 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS

GED SCORES	TESTED BEFORE 1978	TESTED 1978-1981	TESTED 1982-1985	ALL STUDENTS
GED Total	.2971	.2441	.3129	.2548
Sub-Test Scores:				
Math	.2622	.1601	.2759	.1859
Reading	.2575	.2181	.2652	.2223
Science	.2558	.1882	.2309	.2042
Social Studies	.2641	.2183	.2579	.2294
Writing	.3017	.2407	.2483	.2337
N =	374	1,101	551	2,026

All correlations are significant at the .01 level.

The scattergram on the following page shows the spread of first semester grades for students whose GED scores were available. It illustrates the difficulty of establishing cut-offs for college admission based on the GED score alone.

GED HOLDERS ENROLLED AT 12 UA SCHOOLS, 1979-1984
FIRST SEMESTER PERFORMANCE BY GED SCORES



GED Scores of University of Wisconsin Students

UW admissions officers indicated that they usually review the applications of non-traditional students on an individual basis. GED scores may be examined, along with the student's high school transcript, activities since leaving high school, test results (ATC, SAT, SCAT, Nelson-Denny Reading Test, or local tests). Two campuses--Milwaukee and Madison--have formal policies requiring GED scores above passing. At these schools students who demonstrate the ability to do college-level work may be accepted in spite of low GED scores. In other cases GED holders with above-average GED scores may not be accepted by universities if their high school transcripts or other test results indicate that they would be poor risks for college.

The mean GED score of students enrolled in University of Wisconsin four-year schools during the study period was 275. Scores varied by campus from a mean low of 263 at Superior to a mean high of 311 at Madison.

About 23% of the GED holders whose scores were available had scores from 225 (passing) to 249 (near the average of the national high school norming group). Only 22% of the GED holders had total scores of 300 or more.

Subtest Scores

On the average GED holders scored slightly lower on the writing and math GED subtests than on reading, science and social studies. According to the GED Testing Service, a subtest score of 55 was achieved by 31% of the high school seniors in the norming group. A subtest score of 52 was achieved by 46% of the seniors in the norming group.

GED SUBTEST SCORES OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS

GED SUBTEST	Median Score	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Math	52.6	52.7	7.5	35	80
Reading	56.5	56.9	7.7	37	80
Science	56.4	56.8	6.8	35	80
Social Studies	55.4	55.9	7.6	35	80
Writing	51.7	52.1	7.4	35	80

GED SCORES

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR EACH CAMPUS

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN CAMPUS	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N
Eau Claire	271	277	34	225	359	93
Green Bay	271	272	28	225	342	224
LaCrosse	278	275	26	226	321	64
Madison	312	311	29	236	384	53
Milwaukee	276	276	30	225	383	900
Oshkosh	280	277	29	226	348	108
Parkside	263	266	29	225	363	300
Platteville	264	266	24	226	318	13
River Falls	282	283	30	233	328	10
Stevens Point	281	277	34	226	342	63
Stout	263	271	31	225	342	48
Superior	260	263	28	225	329	79
Whitewater	275	277	33	225	354	70
ALL CAMPUSES	273	275	31	225	384	2,025

GED SCORES OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT U.W. SCHOOLS

UW CAMPUS	PERCENT OF STUDENTS BY RANGE OF GED SCORES				
	225-249	250-274	275-299	300-349	350-400
Eau Claire	22%	32%	23%	21%	2%
Green Bay	23	32	29	16	--
LaCrosse	20	24	34	22	--
Madison	2	7	26	57	8
Milwaukee	22	27	28	22	1
Oshkosh	21	22	30	27	--
Parkside	33	28	26	12	1
Platteville	31	23	38	8	--
River Falls	10	30	30	30	--
Stevens Point	29	17	26	28	--
Stout	27	31	21	21	--
Superior	38	25	25	12	--
Whitewater	21	28	25	23	3
13 FOUR-YEAR CAMPUSES	23%	27%	28%	21%	1%

Table is based on GED scores identified for 2,025 of the 2,896 GED holders, or 70.0%.

IX. RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ACT TEST SCORES AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Many schools use ACT scores from the American College Testing Program as a factor in admitting students or as a tool for determining what level coursework students should take. Four universities--Milwaukee, Green Bay, LaCrosse and Oshkosh--had ACT scores available for 370 of their students. Milwaukee requires GED holders with scores below 265 to take the ACT or SAT test. LaCrosse requires all entering freshmen to take the ACT. Oshkosh requires freshmen below age 25 to take the ACT or SAT, and Green Bay requires students with lower scores to take the ACT.

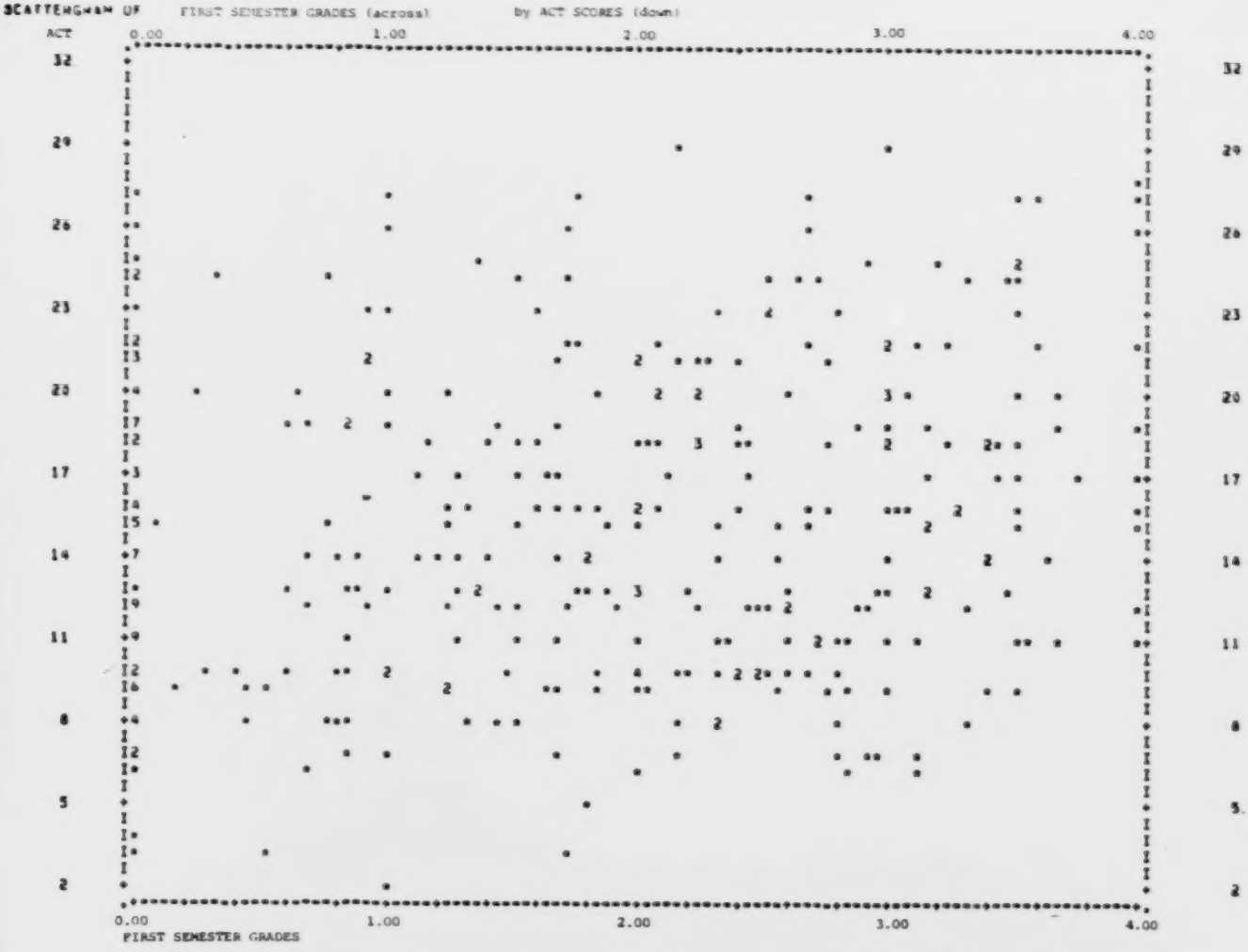
The ACT consists of four multiple choice tests covering the academic subject areas of English usage, mathematics, social studies and natural sciences. Test results are reported as standard scores for each subject area and for the test as a whole. Scores range from 1 to 36. Composite scores have a standard deviation of 6.0 and a mean of 18.0 for college-bound high school students.

Poor Predictor of College Success

For the 370 GED holders tested, the ACT did not provide a helpful predictor for success in college. The correlation coefficient between ACT scores and first semester grades was .1738, at a significance level of .157. That is, 3 percent of the first semester GPA could be predicted from ACT scores. ($r = .1738$, $r^2 = .0302$)

The scattergram on the following page indicates the wide range of grades earned by ACT scores.

GED HOLDERS ENROLLED AT 12 UA SCHOOLS, 1979-1984
FIRST SEMESTER PERFORMANCE OF GED HOLDERS GIVEN ACT TEST



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For the population studied there was a significant relationship between ACT composite scores and GED total scores. The correlation coefficient between ACT scores and GED scores was .7450 at the .01 level of significance. That is, 56% of the performance on one test could be predicted from performance on the other test. ($r = .7450$, $r^2 = .5550$)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACT AND GED SCORES FOR STUDENTS AT 4 UNIVERSITIES

ACT Composite Score	PERCENT BY SCORE ON GED TESTS 225-249	250-274	275-299	300-349	350-400	TOTAL	Number Tested#
1 - 6	100%	--	--	--	--	100%	6
7 - 11	67	25%	6%	2%	--	100%	95
12 - 15	41	46	11	2	--	100%	63
16 - 19	17	29	32	22	--	100%	78
20 - 24	--	10	37	53	--	100%	49
25 - 29	--	6	16	72	6	100%	18
TOTAL	35	27	19	19	--	100%	309

#GED scores were not located for 61 GED holders given the ACT test.

Nationally, the median college cross-validated correlation between ACT test scores and first semester grades was .48. In national studies when a multiple linear regression equation was constructed of the four ACT tests and four self-reported high school grades(in junior year English, math, social studies and natural science), the correlation coefficient for the first semester grades was .54. GPA predictions were somewhat less accurate for nontraditional-age freshmen than for traditional-age freshmen--.57 for students ages 17-19, .46 for students 20-25, and .45 for students over 25. (See Appendix A)

X. FIRST SEMESTER PERFORMANCE OF GED HOLDERS

Review of first semester performance was possible for 2,351 GED holders attending twelve of the 13 campuses. Due to the number of students enrolled, Parkside only provided summary data on its 544 GED holders. Cummulative grade point average (GPA) experience and percents of Parkside students leaving school before graduation suggest that inclusion of Parkside GED holders might have lowered the overall first semester performance statistics of GED holders in the UW System.

Grade Point Averages

For the tweleve UW schools studied, over half of the GED holders in the study period successfully completed their first semester with an overall grade point average of 1.50 or better, on a 4.00 system. About 1/3 of the students earned grade point averages of D or U (0.00 to 1.49), and 8% withdrew in mid-semester before earning an grades.

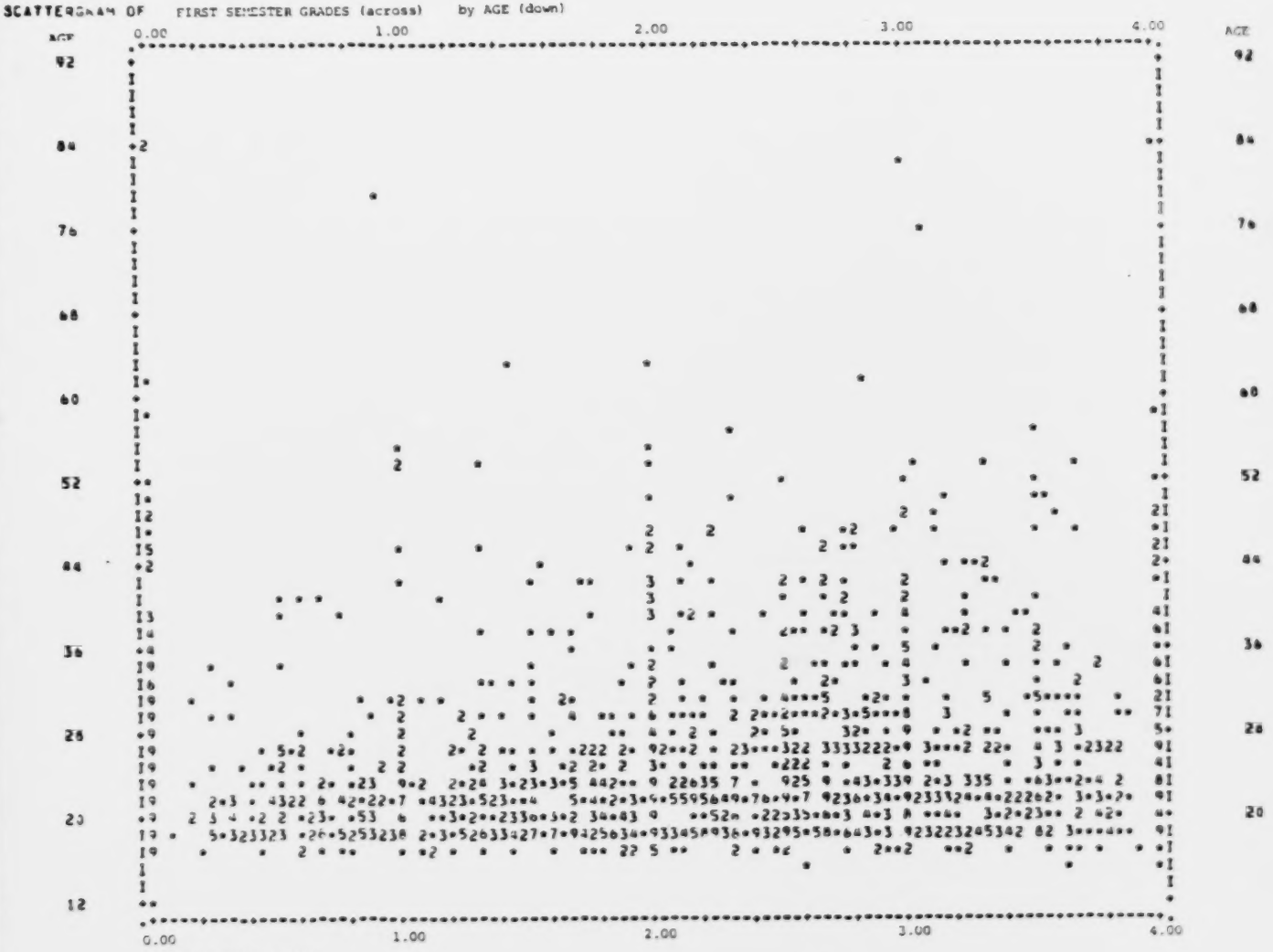
FIRST SEMESTER GRADES OF GED HOLDERS ENROLLED AT 12 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS*

First Semester Grade Point Average	Number of Students	Percent of Total
A (3.50 - 4.00)	247	10.5%
B (2.50 - 3.49)	603	25.6
C (1.50 - 2.49)	550	23.4
D (0.50 - 1.49)	297	12.6
U (0.00 - 0.49)	460	19.6
Withdrew in mid-semester	194	8.3
TOTAL	2,351	100.0%

*Does not include Parkside.

Age did not appear to be a significant factor in success of GED holders in their first semester at UW schools. Less than 2% of the first semester performance could be predicted from the GED holder's age. ($r = .15635, r^2 = .02445$) See the scattergram on the following page.

GED HOLDERS ENROLLED AT 12 UW SCHOOLS, 1979-1984
FIRST SEMESTER PERFORMANCE BY AGE



Credits Earned

A review of student transcripts revealed that many GED holders were enrolled in non-credit remedial courses and some students dropped courses they were not passing. Other students were advised or decided to take lower courseloads in their beginning semesters.

The average number of credits earned by GED holders was less than half that expected for fulltime students. The mean number of credits earned for students first enrolling in the fall or spring semesters was 6.5 credits. (Superior and River Falls were excluded since the schools operate on a quarter-credit system.) Students first enrolling in the summer earned an average of 3.8 credits.

Academic Status

At the end of the first semester, 1% of the GED holders were given semester honors and 64% were in good standing (for 11 schools with data available). Excluding the students who withdrew in mid-semester, the remaining students were on probation (11%), suspended (5%), dropped (4%), given academic warnings (2%), on conditional or special status (3%), or ineligible (2%).

CREDITS EARNED FIRST SEMESTER BY GED HOLDERS

AT 10 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS*

CREDITS EARNED, FIRST SEMESTER	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
None	499	23.4%
1 - 5	458	21.5
6 - 11	676	31.7
12 - 17	473	22.2
18 - 23	26	1.2
TOTAL	2,132	100.0%
Mean Credits Earned	6.3	

CREDITS EARNED BY FIRST SEMESTER ENROLLED

AT 10 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS*

CREDITS EARNED FIRST SEMESTER	FALL ENTRANTS Number	Percent	SPRING ENTRANTS Number	Percent	SUMMER ENTRANTS Number	Percent
None	307	23.5%	156	24.5%	34	19.9%
1 - 5	244	18.7	144	22.5	69	40.3
6 - 11	405	31.0	199	31.1	67	39.2
12 - 17	327	25.0	138	21.6	1	0.6
18 - 23	24	1.8	2	0.3	--	---
TOTAL	1,307	100.0%	639	100.0%	171	100.0%
Mean Credits Earned	6.8		6.0		3.8	

*Does not include Superior or River Falls who operate on a quarter credit system, nor Parkside.

ACADEMIC STATUS OF GED STUDENTS

AT THE END OF THE FIRST SEMESTER AT

11 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS *

ACADEMIC STATUS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Dean's list or semester honors	19	1.3%
Good Standing	896	64.0
Probation	159	11.3
Suspended	68	4.9
Dropped	50	3.6
Conditional	31	2.2
Academic warning	31	2.2
Ineligible	33	2.4
Special classification	12	0.9
Withdrew during mid-semester	101	7.2
TOTAL	1,400	100.0%

* Does not include Milwaukee or Parkside.

XI.. SECOND SEMESTER PERFORMANCE OF GED HOLDERS

Second semester performance of GED holders was analyzed for the eleven schools which made such data available. In these schools the performance of GED holders declined. 346 students (28% of the total students enrolled before Fall, 1984-85) did not continue school the second semester. Although many of the students leaving school were failing, others were not. 6% had A-averages, 12% had B-averages, 13% - C averages, 13% - D averages, and 41% U-averages. Sixteen percent withdrew from all their courses in mid-semester.

Grade Changes

Of the 906 students continuing second semester, grades went down for 440 students, improved for 297 students, and stayed the same for 89 students (including 29 students with 0.00 GPAs). Eighty students withdrew from all courses in one or both semesters. By the end of the second semester the mean GPA for remaining students was 2.34 (C+).

SECOND SEMESTER GRADES OF GED HOLDERS

ENROLLED AT 11 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS *

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Second Semester GPA:		
A - average	86	6.9%
B - average	291	23.3
C - average	259	20.7
D - average	128	10.2
U - average	90	7.2
Withdrew in mid-semester	52	4.1
Didn't continue 2nd semester	346	27.6
TOTAL	1,252	100.0%

* Second semester data was not collected for Milwaukee or Parkside. Students first enrolled in Fall, 1984 (the last semester of the study) were not included.

ACADEMIC STATUS OF GED HOLDERS

AT END OF SECOND SEMESTER

11 U.W. SCHOOLS

ACADEMIC STATUS AT END OF SEMESTER	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Dean's list or semester honors	13	1.4%
Good Standing	587	64.8
(Sub-Total)	(600)	(66.2%)
Probation	111	12.3
Withdrew mid-semester	52	5.8
Dismissed	41	4.5
Suspension	51	5.6
Ineligible	18	2.0
Academic warning	10	1.1
Conditional	15	1.7
Special classification	6	0.6
Permission required to continue	2	0.2
(Sub-Total)	(306)	(33.8%)
TOTAL	906	100.0%

* Second semester data was not collected for Milwaukee or Parkside. The chart does not include students who first enrolled in Fall, 1984, the last semester of the study.

XII. PERFORMANCE OF TRANSFER STUDENTS

GED holders who transferred to University of Wisconsin schools from other colleges and universities (or who earned college credits through the CLEP exam, through the University of Wisconsin-Extension or for military experience) performed better than GED holders enrolling in college for the first time. Data was available on transfer records at eleven campuses (not Milwaukee or Parkside).

About 1/5 of the GED holders accepted at the 11 schools had transfer credits from other institutions. Sixty-three of these 315 students earned credits from two or more sources (schools, CLEP and or military experience). They are listed under the institution from which they earned the most credits.

TRANSFER STUDENTS ENROLLED AT 11 SCHOOLS

Previous Institution	Number of Students
Other 4-yr. UW school	71
UW Center campuses	65
VTAE	28
Wisconsin private colleges	8
Out-of-state colleges	95
(Sub-Total)	(267)
UWEX credits	7
CLEP test	28
Military experience	13
(Sub-Total)	(48)
TOTAL	315

Transfer students had better retention rates than GED holders entering college for the first time, earned better grades and graduated in higher numbers. Eighteen of the 26 GED holders who graduated during the study period were transfer students-- at the 11 schools studied.

PERFORMANCE OF TRANSFER STUDENTS AT 11 SCHOOLS

ENROLLMENT STATUS	Percent of Transfer Students	Percent of First-Time College Students
Graduated	5.7%	0.7%
Still enrolled	36.8	28.0
Transferred to other UW school	1.0	1.2
Left before graduation	56.5	70.1
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%
Number of Students	315	1,084

Transfer students also earned higher grades. The mean first semester GPA of transfer students was 2.30 (C+), a half grade higher than the 1.78 average for first-time students.

XIII. PROFILE OF STUDENTS LEAVING BEFORE GRADUATION

Of the 1,982 students in the study who left before graduating, 35% had earned no credits before leaving and 65% had earned fewer than 25 credits (sophomore standing). Only 4% of the GED holders earned 54 credits (junior class standing).

STUDENTS WHO LEFT UW SCHOOLS BEFORE GRADUATION
13 Schools

Credits Earned Before Leaving School	Number of Students	Percent of Total	Cummulative Percent
None	629	31.7%	31.7%
1 - 12	762	38.4	70.2
13- 24	299	15.1	85.3
25-53 sophomore standing	211	10.6	95.9
54-83 junior standing	56	2.8	98.7
84 and above, senior standing	25	1.3	100.0
TOTAL	1,982	100.0%	

Quarter credits earned at River Falls and Superior were converted to the equivalent credits used by other UW campuses.

Some GED holders accummulated additional credits from prior schools attended, UWEX credits, CLEP tests or military experience. The following table shows all credits accummulated by GED holders leaving 11 of the UW schools (not Parkside or Milwaukee). For the schools analyzed, even with these additional credits, 74% of the GED holders leaving school had not reached their sophomore year, and 90% had not reached their junior year.

STUDENTS WHO LEFT SCHOOL BEFORE GRADUATION: 11 UW SCHOOLS

(including transfer credits earned)

Credits Earned Before Leaving School (incl. transfer credits, CLEP, UWEX, military)	Number of Students	Percent of Total	Cummulative Percent
None	229	24.1%	24.1%
1 - 12	336	35.3	59.3
13- 24	139	14.6	73.9
25-53 sophomore standing	152	16.0	89.9
54-83 junior standing	57	6.0	95.9
84 and above, senior standing	39	4.1	100.0
TOTAL	785	100.0%	

Quarter credits earned at River Falls and Superior were converted to the equivalent credits used by the other UW campuses.

SEMESTERS ATTENDED BY 1,402 GED HOLDERS AT 11 U.W. SCHOOLS *

NUMBER OF SEMESTERS ATTENDED	GRADUATES	STUDENTS STILL ENROLLED	STUDENTS NO LONGER ENROLLED	
			NUMBER	PERCENT OF TOTAL
1	-	113	371	39.0%
2	-	56	248	26.1
3	-	51	119	12.5
4	5	50	67	7.0
5	2	34	49	5.2
6	4	30	37	3.9
7	4	25	23	2.4
8	2	14	7	0.7
9	2	17	10	1.1
10	2	12	5	0.5
11	1	8	7	0.7
12	1	4	4	0.4
13	2	4	3	0.3
14	-	5	1	0.1
15	1	1	1	0.1
TOTAL	26	424	952	100.0%
Mean Number of Semesters	7.7	4.2	2.6	
Standard Deviation	3.2	3.2	2.2	

*Does not include Milwaukee or Parkside.

PROFILE OF GED HOLDERS NO LONGER ENROLLED

AT 11 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOLS *

LAST GRADE POINT AVERAGE	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
A - average	46	4.8%
B - average	192	20.2
C - average	243	25.5
D - average	204	21.4
U - average	203	22.4
Withdrew before earning any grades	54	5.7
TOTAL	952	100.0%

* Does not include Milwaukee or Parkside

LAST KNOWN ACADEMIC STATUS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Dean's list	5	0.5%
Associate degree granted	6	0.7
Good standing	356	37.4
(Sub-Total)	(367)	(38.6%)
Probation	152	16.0
Suspended	124	13.0
Withdrew in mid-semester	117	12.3
Dropped	105	11.0
Ineligible	50	5.3
Conditional	22	2.3
Academic warning	5	0.5
Permission required to continue	2	0.2
Special classification	8	0.8
(Sub-Total)	(585)	(61.4%)
TOTAL	952	100.0%

* Does not include Parkside or Milwaukee.

The Predictive Validity of the ACT for Nontraditional-age Freshmen

Randi Levitz and Richard Sawyer

To offset projected decreases in the population of traditional-age college students and to provide greater opportunities for older students, many institutions have waived admissions requirements often perceived by adults as barriers to attending college. One commonly-waived requirement is the provision of standardized ability assessment results traditionally used in combination with high school grades to predict levels of achievement in college. To date, however, little data on the validity of these predictions for older freshmen has been available for use in making such policy decisions.

This study is based on data drawn from a sample of institutions participating in ACT's predictive research services in 1977-78 and in one or more of the years 1973-74 to 1975-76. A multiple linear regression equation constructed of the four ACT Assessment Program test scores and four self-reported high school grades was used to predict freshman college grade point average (GPA). These predictions were made on the basis of 106,613 freshman records from 223 institutions (in 1973-74 to 1975-76) and then cross-validated against the GPA actually earned by 107,059 freshmen at those same institutions in 1977-78.* A summary of the findings on prediction accuracy for various age groups is presented below.

	Age 17-19	Age 20-25	Age 26+	Total Group
Mean absolute error (MAE) between predicted and earned GPA (Median MAEs are expressed in grade point units)	.53	.70	.73	.54
Pearson correlation between predicted and earned GPA (Median r)	.57	.46	.45	.54
Number of colleges	207	68	32	216

- Depending upon the level of prediction accuracy required, ACT test scores and high school grades successfully predict GPA for freshmen who are age 20 and older. (See MAEs above.)

- The strength of the relationship between predicted and earned GPA for freshmen age 20 and older is close to that noted for traditional-age freshmen. (See correlations above.)

GPA predictions were somewhat less accurate for nontraditional-age freshmen than for traditional-age freshmen. However, as the statistics measuring prediction accuracy approach levels obtained for traditional-age freshmen, ACT test scores and high school grades may be used with reasonable confidence in the prediction of GPA for freshmen age 20 and older. Of course, in individual admissions decisions, whether involving older or younger students, predicted GPA should be only one of many variables considered when estimating a student's chance of success. Further, individual institutions should monitor the effectiveness of their prediction procedures.

* Detailed information on the sampling procedures and methodology used in this study may be obtained from Randi Levitz.